Lifestyle / C2
Art amid the rubble

Metro / A22
2nd public attorney ambushed, wounded

Infotech
New viruses spreading via websites, instant messengers

Business / B2
DOTC wants LRT-1 expansion deferred due to land lack

Tanong ng Bayan
May saysay pa ba ang Edsa I?
CELL CARD KADA AMIN
CELLPHONE MON JUNIOSO Text 2910 <name>

Bunye: Even US envoy ignoring travel advisory

By DJ C. Cabacungan Jr. and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IGNORE the US state department's travel advisories and like the American ambassador does.

Press Secretary Ignacio

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, February 21, 2005 • 42 pages / vol. 28 / no. 75

website: www.inq7.net

Pinay entertainers try to beat Japan deadline

By TJ Burgonio

JUSTICE, an entertainer, can't wait to go back to Japan.

A week after flying home last month, she packed her bags and kneeled for mercy at the Manila regional trial court to ask for the return of her passport, which was confiscated by immigration officials at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) in Mandaluyong City.

Ex-solon in kidnap held

Blast witness an impostor, says officer

By Christian V. Esguerra

HAS THE Philippine National Police been taken for a ride in its investigation of the Makati blast on Valentine's Day?

Forty-eight hours after the PNP said it was closing in on three bombers, a senior police official branded as an "impostor and opportunist" the witness who supposedly identified the attackers and pinpointed their locations.

"He's bogus, a fake man [a fake]," he told the Inquirer, fuming with laughter, when asked for developments about the revelations of the male witness named in television reports as "Francisco."

The officer asked not to be identified. He said in the past spoken on condition of anonymity in order not to put his organization in a bad light or create any impression of personality clashes within the PNP leadership.

The official said he and other officers reached the conclusion after lengthy interviewing the man, a reformist terrorism suspect involved in several members of the police intelligence community.

A background check on the purported witness also suggested that he was nothing but an "opportunist" who had at times approached investigators.

His "style" was to offer what he would say was juicy information in exchange for money, the PNP official said.

He said he must also be refused during the investigations of the assassination of Senator Jose Wenceslao Vacante last year.

"He also claimed that he knew something about the crime, who was behind it," the officer said said. "Sorayunin niya kung sa'yo ed and it turned out that it was just a simple lor witness ka. Gito's like."

Police have been quiet up to now on who Francisco's contacts are.

Even PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay insisted yesterday to decline to himself

ISLAMIC NEW YEAR

Filipino Muslims join the rest of the Islamic world in celebrating Ashura's, or New Year according to the Islamic lunar calendar, which falls on the 10th of Muharram. One of the most significant events in Islam, Ashoura has its spiritual and MAGKAPI videos and welcomes new and human changes for the coming year.

Cops save 3-year-old; 7 arrested

By Luige S. del Puerto and Christian V. Esguerra

FROM AN apartment in Cubao, Quezon City, neighbors could hear the cries of the boy: "Inay o'yie na po ako [Please bring me home]."

They had no idea that the child was a 3-year-old son of a Chinese-Filipino family who was abducted in Pasig City on Feb. 9 by three gunmen.

On Saturday night, 11 days after the abduction, the police and kidnapping unit rescued the boy from a couple hired to guard him.

Aaron Gerardo Baldan, a former corporal-mission of Quezon City, was one of the seven suspects arrested in the operation, police announced yesterday. (See related story on Page A2)

One of the suspects pointed to Baldan as the alleged mastermind, Philippine National Police (PNP) Director Oscar Inabon briefly said in an interview.

Baldan, 40, who had appeared

BALDAN: Actor-turned-politician on 6-unit spotlight.

in action movies and sometimes played villain roles, was a representative of Quezon City's third district from 1992 to 1995.

The kidnapped boy (name withheld as a matter of editorial policy) was playing with the couple's two children when rescued, according to committee director Teresita Ang-See.

Police said the kidnappers initially demanded P200 million in exchange for the boy's release. It was the first time in recent months that a kidnap gang had asked for such a huge ransom, PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay said in Inabon.

The first two months of this year has seen an upsurge of kid-

8 Iraq suicide bombers kill 55 on Shiite holiday

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Eight suicide bombers struck in quick succession in a wave of attacks that killed 55 people as Iraqi Shiites marched and lashed themselves with chains in ritual mourning of the 7th century death of a leader of their Muslim sect. Ninety-one people have been killed in the latest in the past two days.

For the second year running, insurgent attacks shattered the commemoration of Ashoura, the holiest day of the Shiite religious calendar. But Saturday's violence produced a significantly smaller death toll than the 181 killed in earlier bombings in Baghdad and the holy city of Karbala a year ago.

The dead this year included a US soldier who was killed in Baghdad when American troops responded to calls for assistance from Iraqi forces unable to cope with a show of armies.

With majority Shiites poised to take control of the country for the first time in modern Iraqi history, the interim government and Shiite politicians vowed the bloodshed would not cause the nation to spiral into civil war.

The suicide bombings were attempts "to create a religious war within Iraq. Iraqis will not allow this to happen. Iraqis will stand united as Iraqi Shiitism, and Iraq will not fall into sectarian war," Mowaffak al-Rubaie, the national security adviser for the interim government, told The Associated Press.

"The bombings on Shiite mosques and shrines on Ashoura by terrorists that call themselves Muslims are in fact serious by no-

Bunye dispels fears of nat'l ID system

By DJ C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SOME people might be spooked by President Macapagal-Arroyo's plan to implement a national identification system because they have something to hide like narcissus, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"Probably those who are afraid of this [national ID system] are those with a lot of names. Other relatives," Bunye said in a radio interview.

Bunye, also the President's spokesperson, who is known for his affluent remarks and deadpan humor, later said he meant this as a joke. He said it was unlikely that the national ID system would disclose a person's unsavory relationships.

He said the ID system's main aim was to expose individuals with "multiple addresses or those with something to hide."

The national ID system will require information such as the name of mom's spouse or date of birth that is already disclosed to us in a driver's social security ID or driver's license.

By synchronizing all pertinent data about an individual in one ID that could be used to

THE ORIGINAL EDSA

Shrine sanctuary for RP artistry, talent

By Charles F. Bolden
Property

MIGUE for hopes designing structures in the 'Wa, Francisco "Bobby" Mañosa has been on a quest—to develop and refine his vision of "contemporary Filipino architecture."

Such a quest has produced some of the finest architectural landmark, among them the Mary Queen of Peace Shrine (more popularly known as the Edsa Shrine) in Mandaluyong City.

"When I was asked in 1988 to design a memorial that would commemorate the historic [Edsa] revolt, I was already thinking of a

EDSA Shrine architect Francisco Mañosa.

CHURCH as center symbolizes the Filipinos' faith and gratitude to God for achieving freedom.

A3
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2008

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Japanese execs buck VAT on power firms

By Carlos Conde
and Christine O. Avendaño

JAPANESE businessmen have also joined the clamor against the imposition of the value-added tax, particularly on independent power producers, warning that this would "drive away the future investors in the power industry."

The Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines, the umbrella organization of Japanese companies operating in the country, made known their strong objections to the lifting of the VAT exemption of IPPs in a letter early this month to then Trade Secretary and now Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

"The zero-rated VAT status of independent power producers that have power purchase agreements with [the] NPC [National Power Corp.] must be maintained," said chamber president Ryuhei(sic) Kawaguchi.

The reference to a zero-rated VAT status is a statement of the same guarantee made to IPPs in their contracts with the NPC.

Congress is seriously considering the lifting of the VAT exemptions enjoyed by IPPs, utilities and shipping companies, and compensation to raise much-needed revenues for the government.

"In view of the policy consistency in the critical infrastructure development, we believe that the government should honor its commitment in accordance with the PPA on access to duty-many the future investors in the power industry," Kawaguchi said in a letter dated Feb. 4.

Former Speaker and now Rep. Nolt Pantaleón (3SP, Camarines Sur), who has taken up the cudgels for IPPs, cited Kawaguchi's letter during floor deliberation of the House on Feb. 16.

Under a pending House bill, a 12-percent VAT will be imposed on IPPs, oil firms, airlines and lawyers, and on the purchase of sovereign vessels.

Pantaleón said that based on the sentiments expressed by the Japanese chamber, the imposition of a tax on power "can entail a strong signal again to the investors."

"Some might not be interested or discouraged to further look at the Philippines as a good place for investment," Pantaleón said.

The imposition of a 12-percent VAT on IPPs is expected to generate an additional P66 billion in revenues for the government but Pantaleón insisted that this will take income electricity rates by 12 centavos per kilowatt-hour.

Pantaleón proposed that instead of taxing the IPPs, the BIR should be allowed to increase its rates by 0.1 per kWh.

"Whether we like it or not, you impose a VAT on power, you increase the electricity rate automatically," he said.

Meanwhile, senators Jinggoy Estrada (opposition) warning of an Argentina-type debt crisis for the Philippines if the taxes if the government fails to raise much-needed revenues from tax measures, including the increase in the VAT rate.

"The Argentina hangover will not mark its senators," Sen. Ralph Recto said in a statement. "The government should argue on facts, not on the fear factor."

Recto, who chairs the Senate ways and means committee, said the chamber "will proceed with caution to the VAT bills."

"We cannot rubber-stamp the approval of something that will cost taxpayers P175 billion in five years," he said.

The Senate was expected to start floor deliberations on the VAT proposal by Feb. 28 or after the House has approved a bill that seeks to lift VAT exemptions.

FORENSIC ASSISTANCE
An Australian Federal Police investigator takes photographs of evidence recovered from the Valentine's Day bombing in front of the Evangelista terminal in Davao City

Gov't urged to probe root cause of Sulu fighting

By Carlos Conde

THE OMBUDSMAN, a losing urged to top the Malaysian-led international monitoring team overseeing the ceasefire agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in efforts to put a stop to the fighting raging in Sulu.

Rep. Teresita Dumarpa Lukas, Lanao del Sur1, chairperson of the House committee on social services, proposed the inclusion of the monitoring team in the fact-finding body that will probe into the real cause of the renewed conflict between government troops and armed rebels identified with Abu Misuari, former chair of the Moro National Liberation Front.

"We are calling on the government to create an impartial investigation into the root cause of the fighting and to the international monitoring team as member," Dumarpa said.

The 50-member team, which is led by Maj. Gen. Ismo Sukkeli bin Mohamad Din, an Israeli in the country has become upset the mutual agreement of the government and MILF.

The team was later augmented by soldiers from Brunei.

Dumarpa said the participation of the monitoring team would ensure that the investigation will be fair and unbiased.

"Just as the government and MILF rely on the monitoring for an objective assessment of the ceasefire between them, the government can also depend on the team to help foster and fix causes of the conflict in Sulu," Dumarpa said.

Dumarpa pushed for an investigation into the Sulu conflict after Malacañang brushed aside calls for a ceasefire.

"In the greater interest of the people, both parties are called upon to mutually stop altogether the fighting. There are no victors in any arm only losers who are people," Dumarpa said.

Habir Malik, leader of the rebels landing government troops, earlier said that his forces were forced to attack due to threats initiated by soldiers.

Human rights top agenda of GMA, Burma PM talks

By Nikko Dizon

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will raise the promotion of human rights with Burmese Prime Minister Lt. Gen. Soe Win, who arrived here yesterday afternoon for an overnight official visit in Manila.

"One of the major topics to be discussed by the two leaders is the protection and promotion of human rights," Malacañang said yesterday.

The issue was among the key principles of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), which includes Burma [Myanmar's] and the Philippines.

Burma's continued detention of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has been an embarrassment for Asean which has nonetheless not condemned the internationally reviled regime, believing instead in "constructive engagement" in dealing with the military rulers in Yangon.

Last year, the Asean bloc had called on Suu Kyi to release him. Yet, a democracy icon, to be supported in government but stopped short in calling for her release.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won elections in 1990, but the ruling military junta has refused to honor the victory. She is under house arrest in the Burmese capital Yangon.

Soe Win's arrival with a 23-day-old party and was met by Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor and Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes at the Villamor Air Base and was recorded the nineteenth known government-visiting heads of state.

This is his first visit to Manila since assuming power last year. He is scheduled to leave the Manila today at around 2 p.m.

Activism against the Burmese regime have condemned the government for hosting the prime minister, pointing out how the country suffered under martial law during the Marcos dictatorship that ended in 1986.

"We don't support dictatorships," said Cen Bilakas of the Initiatives for International Dialogue which has been pushing for the freedom of Suu Kyi.

"The commitment to democracy should reflect in our government's dealing with Burma. Please, let us not become the evil that we deplore," he said. **With AFP**

Bishops finally intervene in Luisita labor dispute

By Blanche S. Rivera

CAPITOL Bishops have taken the lead in serving negotiations between striking farmers and the management of Hacienda Luisita, saying the labor dispute should be resolved by this month for the sake of the sugar industry.

Tarlac Archbishop Fernando Capalla said the two parties will meet today in a last-ditch effort to end the labor conflict which has paralyzed the operations of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac and threatens to worry tens of sugarcane-workers who holds for the sacaderia.

Capalla said Dumpaguc Bishop Pacioso Arneito and Tarlac Bishop Florentino Clarino would preside over the meeting, the third this month, between the management of Central Azucarera.

He said the parties have expressed their desire to end the dispute and enter into a compromise.

"They are trying to reach compromise. They are caught in a dilemma because there are 73 workers in the hacienda and 25 in the Central Azucarera who were dismissed by DOLE (the Department of Labor and Employment)," Capalla said in an interview.

"It's not a problem of reinstating them as far as the two groups are concerned. But there is a problem over a reinstatement of them all," he said.

In a decision issued last month, the DOLE reinstated 35 union officers of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu) for allegedly staging an illegal strike.

Another 73 workers from Hacienda Luisita, on the other hand, have pending cases with the National Labor Relations Commission regarding their dismissal from the hacienda.

Capalla said the management was willing to take in some of the Catlu's relieved officers but it would not allow to white all of them.

The management, however, has offered to employ in its future agricultural projects those who would not be reinstated.

"It is still being discussed. There may be people who will volunteer or may not, but let the factories run again because... if they don't resume operations, the sugarcane will be of no use anymore," Capalla said.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has issued a circular to the labor negotiations with the Cojuangco-owned Hacienda Luisita and Central Azucarera after its January last month.

Capalla and two other bishops were personally sought the President's assurance that there would be no violence on the part of the police and military that would be enforcing the DOLE's decision on the Central Azucarera.

Bicam tackles ₱907.6-B '05 budget this week

By Carlos Pablo and Christine O. Avendaño

THE BICAMERAL conference committee will start late this week discussions on the proposed ₱907.6-billion budget for 2005.

Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (LE, Camarines Sur I), chair of the House appropriations committee, said the 2005 budget bill "is perhaps the weakest government guideliner in history."

To ensure transparency, private and civic lookers will soon be allowed to sit in government-only working committees.

"This is the government's way of showing the people that the higher taxes they will pay this year will be spent properly," said Andaya.

Those reserve pointed out include:

- The expansion of the membership of bids and awards committees (BACs) to every government office to include a representative each from the Commission on Audit, a private group and a nongovernment organization (NGO) that can be represented by the clergy.
- The adoption of a single price list for goods to be purchased by government starting from basic items like paper and ball pens.
- The disallowing of projects like waiting sheds, welcome arches and basketball courts.
- The power given to COA to withhold payment for contractors who deliver substandard projects.
- The ban on the purchase of new vehicles and going on foreign travels, except those funded by loans and aids, and
- The posting of project details on the website of the Department of Budget and Management after the award of contracts and during its implementation.

Andaya said that "transparency" will be the operative principle in the pending appropriations bill.

"As a group who rails against corruption, I assure you it will be within the confines of the BAC," Andaya explained.

Since the 2005 budget was not passed by Congress last December, the national government is currently operating under a re-blasted or re-enacted budget for 2004.

The bicameral conference committee, composed of legislators from both houses of Congress, is tasked to reconcile the budget.

The Senate has already formed its seven-member panel but the House has not yet constituted its panel of conferees.

Senators, who held morning and afternoon sessions to tackle the budget bill, had rejected the bicameral conference committee's proposal last week to allow virtually anyone the budget.

"I hope they [congressmen] are not sitting on it... and I hope the intention is not to have a consolidated budget for the third consecutive year," said opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara.

In a phone interview, Angara said that "normally" it would just take one session to form members of the bicameral conference committee.

"It's no great effort to constitute the committee," he said, adding though that he would still want to "give [the House] the benefit of the doubt."

Angara stressed that a third consecutive budget would be a "great waste for the country" because the consequence of a re-enacted budget was that it would provide President Macapagal-Arroyo the power to juggle funds in the budget.

He explained the projects outlined in 2004 have either been completed or substantially completed that the money assigned for the 2004 budget would be now considered savings if the same budget is re-enacted.

Angara warned that the public and the bureaucracy "would make a terrible outcry" against a re-enacted budget.

Last week, Ministry [illegible] Executive Secretary Ed Ermita said that the bicameral conference committee was still not moving to discuss the final budget bill.

Both Ermita and Angara said they were informed that the House panel had not yet been formed.

But Sec. Jokes Arroyo did not see anything sinister about the development.

In a separate phone interview, Arroyo said he did not think Congress would allow the budget to be re-enacted for the third time.

"Neither the Senate nor the House want a re-enacted budget," Arroyo said, noting that Congress would be embarrassed by failing to study.

Arroyo also pointed out that the House was busy the whole last week with three deliberations on the proposal to remove the value-added tax exemptions of goods and services.

U.S. SOLDIERS inspect a bus destroyed by a suicide bomber in a Shiite district of Baghdad. Five people were killed and 44 others were injured when a suicide bomber climbed onto the bus and detonated explosives. AFP

8 Iraq suicide bombers kill 55 on Shiite holiday

(Turn to page A6)

sectors only attempting to spill ever more Muslim blood by encouraging sectarian violence," he said.

Deadliest

The Saturday carnage was the deadliest of any day since last month's elections for a new national assembly in which the Shiite-led, the United Iraqi Alliance won 48 percent of the vote in Iraq's first democratic balloting. The alliance was expected to name its candidate for prime minister in the coming days. Forty-four people died in shooter-day violence.

As the violence ravaged the country, a five-member US congressional delegation, including Sen. Hillary Clinton, the New York Democrat, met with Iraqi government officials in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone.

"The fact that you have these horrific bombings now wreaking such hatred and violence while people pray is to me, an indication of their failure," Clinton told reporters.

Bayan Jabr, a leading member of the Shiite Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), said the attacks had failed to create a conflict between Shiites and the Sunni Arab minority. Shiites account for about 60 percent of Iraq's 26 million people. The Sunnis make up 20 percent of the population, but dominated politics under Saddam Hussein and previous governments after Iraq gained independence from Britain.

Jabr called the attackers a small faction of Sunnis "who are extremist Wahhabis who want to spark a civil war in Iraq."

But, he added, "a sectarian war will never come in Iraq, because Iraq is not like Afghanistan or Pakistan. We have tribal, mariital, and historical relations with Sunnis and nothing will affect it."

Rapid buildup

The death toll built up rapidly on Saturday as the dangerous coordinated attacks throughout the country employing suicide bombers—responsible for most deaths—mortar fire and gunmen, said Capt. Suhab Yassin, a defense ministry official.

One of the deadliest attacks was the work of a suicide car bomber at an Iraqi army checkpoint in Latifiya, 32 km south of Baghdad, killing nine Iraqi soldiers.

At least seven other bombers staged attacks in Baghdad and the region. Explosions were reported in the capital throughout the day and into the night.

It was unclear which of the attacks in Baghdad claimed the life of the American soldier. A second soldier was wounded in the attack, which also killed an Iraqi.

Insurgents appeared to have struck as well in several Iraqi cities steeped in anxiety that was prompted by last week's deadly bombing blasts. But in Kerbala, the Shiite holy city 80 km south of Baghdad and site of one of last year's murderous explosions, no violence was reported on Saturday.

Hundreds of thousands people had gathered there to mark the holy day, which commemorates the death of the Imam Hussein, a grandson of the prophet Mohammad. Hussein was killed in a power struggle in 680 and is buried in a gold-domed shrine in Kerbala.

Nearly all of Saturday's attacks inside Baghdad took places in the southern Dawaliya and Kazimiya districts.

Assaults begin

The assaults began before noon, when a bomber walked into a tent outside a Sunni mosque in western Baghdad and blew himself up, killing at least three people and injuring 13. About 10 people were inside the tent attending a funeral.

It was unclear why the attacker struck the tent half of Sunnis outside the Fouda Shiite mosque, but similar targeting were in place outside Shiite mosques for the Ashoura celebration. Most attacks by insurgents...who see thought to be predominantly Sunni extremists...are aimed at Shiites.

Next, a suicide bomber killed two Iraqi National Guardsmen near the north, while another suicide attacker blew himself up on a public bus in Kazimiya, killing one child and six adults. But people were injured.

Police officer Kashid Hassan said another suicide bomber blew himself up close to the Kadhimiya shrine in Baghdad's west Shiites, including three members of the national guard, were killed. Five blast also injured 55 people, he said.

According to a police captain, two more suicide bombers died in the Kazimiya area, one who blew himself up in the Judges Bank one—an unidentified man—but killed no one, and another who was apparently shot dead by US troops.

In other attacks, a suicide bomber blew up a van outside an Iraqi National Guard base in Mahmudiya, killing three Iraqi guardsmen and wounding 40 others.

Six Iraqi guardsmen were killed in a mortar attack on the main highway between Baghdad and Kerbala.

Gunmen burned up on a building in Baghdad opened fire on a funeral procession as mourners carried the coffins of some of the victims of a Friday bombing at the al-Khadimain mosque. Iraqi forces beat back that attack, capturing one of the assailants, said Spc. Ali Hussein. No casualties were reported.

Police said eight other people were killed in unspecified insurgent violence in Baghdad and Mosul.

Arrests

Also Saturday authorities reported arresting two insurgent leaders, including a top aide to Iraqi al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian-born terror mastermind.

Brigadier police chief Abdel Ghafur said his forces had captured Ghaliz Abu Rawad, also known as the "Prince of the Holy Warriors." He was described as a top aide to al-Zarqawi and is the man behind the insurgency in the city about 50 km northeast of the capital.

The Iraqi government also said it arrested one of the key insurgent leaders in the north in a raid in Mosul. He was identified as Rashid Abdul Khadar al-Mahmoudi, 36, also known as Abu Nur, a former member of Saddam Hussein's Baath party. AP

IRAQI workers vacuum the body of a victim near the wreckage of a bus.

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE) FOR LAWYERS

March 12 & 19, 2005 and April 2 & 9, 2005

The Supreme Court of the Philippines mandates ALL LAWYERS to comply with the 36 credit unit requirement under *Bar Matter 850* as a requisite for continuing the practice of law. Failure to comply would mean being listed as a delinquent member of the IBP and will not be allowed to practice law. The first compliance period ended last December 31, 2004. Lawyers may avail of one 36-UNIT FULL COURSE SEMINAR which may be credited to either the first compliance period or the second compliance period. REGISTER NOW!

Month/Week (your choice)	Date(s)	SUBJECTS CLASSIFICATION (MODULE UNITS)	SPEAKER/S	VENUE
March 12, 2005 Session	SAT Session	8:30am Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy (2 U's)	Legal Writing	Justice Hugo T. Gutierrez Jr.
	SUN Session 10:30-12:30pm	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (1.5 U)	Pre-Trial Skills (1.5 U) Conduct, ect.	Justice Noel G. Tijam
	FRI Session 1:30pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 U's)	Updates in Criminal Law	Justice Rhodolfo B. Peralta
	SAT Session 8:30am	Alternative Dispute Resolution (2 U's)	International & Domestic Arbitration	Rose Carmelle G. Pedrajo
March 19, 2005 Session	SAT Session 9:30am	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 U's)	Updates in Civil & Criminal Procedure	Justice Ruben T. Reyes
	SUN Session 12:30pm	Alternative Dispute Resolution (2 U's)	ADR in the Workplace	Dean Evalyn M. Buenaagua
	FRI Session 1:30pm	BOLE-Prescribed Subjects Technology and the Law (3 UU)	Electricity & Electronic Evidence, Operations Research & Programming	Justice Rogelio E. Vinzon-Chato
	SAT Session 8:30am	Legal Ethics (1.5 U)	Role Ethics in Criminal Practice & Updates in Legal Ethics	Justice Ruben L. Rodillas
April 2, 2005 Session	SAT Session 8:30am	Trial Advocacy & Legal Writing (2 U's)	Trial Advocacy	Justice Magdangal M. de Leon
	SUN Session 10:30-12:30pm	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (1.5 U)	Trial Techniques, Use of Evidence & Ethics in Communication	Justice Cadiz and C. Asuncion
	FRI Session 1:30pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 U's)	Updates in Commercial Laws	Atty. Carlos G. Cortes
	SAT Session 8:30am	Legal Ethics (1.5 U)	The Lawyer's Oath	Justice Oswaldo D. Agcaoili
April 9, 2005 Session	SAT Session 8:30am	International Law (1.5 U)	International Law & the Arbitration of Aliens	Atty. Rosendo P. Calderon
	SUN Session 10:30-12:30pm	BOLE-Prescribed Subjects Technology and the Law (3 UU)	Rules on Electronic Evidence	Atty. Ivan John E. Uy
	FRI Session 1:30pm	BOLE-Prescribed Subjects Reforms in the Practice of the Law (1.5 U)	Reforms in the Practice of the Profession	Justice Rhodolfo B. Peralta
	SAT Session 8:30am	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 U's)	Updates in Constitutional & Election Laws	Justice Benjamin T. Macadaeg
Total Credit Units		36 UU		

Date/Day/Time: March 12 & 19, 2005 and April 2 & 9, 2005 Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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ASIAN BEAUTIES Miss Indonesia 2005 Artalita Pramesti (left) from Indonesia's West Java province poses with Miss Philippines-Earth Joyce Jimenez during the finals of Indonesia's beauty pageant held in Jakarta on Feb. 19. AFP/ED

'Ligtas-Buntis' campaign kicks off today

By Blanche S. Rivera

AT LEAST 15,000 health workers will be deployed nationwide starting today to distribute some 1.6 million different contraceptive items as the Ligtas Buntis 2005 campaign officially kicks off to promote family planning in the Philippines.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte will lead the ceremonial launch at the Lanao covered court in Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City, one of the densely populated areas in Metro Manila.

The P300-million family planning campaign led by the Department of Health is seen as the first national campaign and the government's most aggressive initiative so far to encourage family planning among Filipino couples.

The government has allocated 1,421,100 cycles of oral pills, 150,950 intrauterine devices and 137,071 vials of injectable contraceptives for the campaign.

The contraceptives, mostly donations from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), are already in the DOH regional offices, Dr. Rosevelyn Cayabyab, director of the DOH Family Planning Program, said.

The campaign will run until March 11, but the DOH expects local governments to follow through the program for a year.

"This will be carried throughout the year. This is according to the government's four pillars of family planning. We are not doing anything wrong; we are not pro-abortionists. We are used to do what's right for the masses," Ethel Mercado, undersecretary for health operations, said in a phone interview yesterday.

The Marian league of the Philippines, which sees the campaign to a move toward population management, will start a motorcade in Angeles, Pampanga, on Feb. 25, and Puerto Princesa, Palawan, on Feb. 26. Starcom said the health workers will be in Tondo tomorrow.

A survey by the Social Weather Stations in December showed that only three out of 10 couples practice one form of family planning.

Some 2.9 million women have an unmet need for family planning. These are usually women who wish to space childbirths or limit the number of their children but are not practicing any family planning methods.

The Ligtas-Buntis campaign would seek to identify that unmet need address their need for family planning, whether through natural or artificial methods, Dayrit said.

The Arroyo administration, which has declared its preference for natural family planning, ensured that contraceptives would be made available to couples who choose artificial methods.

Cayabyab said that buffer stocks left over from last year's donations were enough to meet the possible increase in demand for contraceptives due to Ligtas-Buntis.

While its partner organizations and local governments were allowed to give out condoms, the DOH remains firm in its stance against using condoms for family planning.

"We're promoting responsible parenthood. If we give away too many condoms, we would have taken away informed choice. They would have to use (the condoms)," Dr. Myrna Cabotaje, director of the DOH-Research Center for Disease Prevention and Control, said in an earlier interview.

Gov't in no rush to lift deployment ban to Iraq

By TJ Burgonio

THE GOVERNMENT is in no hurry to lift the ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq since the situation in the Middle Eastern country remains volatile despite the success of the Jan. 30 Iraqi nationwide elections.

"The violence continues. While elections have been held, the situation is not stable yet. Besides, the government is not in place yet," a foreign affairs official, who sought anonymity, said in an interview.

"But lots not been deployed yet," added Jose Brillantes, undersecretary for migrant workers' affairs.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo earlier said the government would review the ban, enforced in July last year in the aftermath of a Filipino truck driver's abduction, after the Iraqi polls, the first free elections since the downfall of Saddam Hussein.

In what was believed to be the bloodiest attack after last month's elections, a series of suicide attacks hit seven towns of the country on Friday, killing 38 people and wounding scores of others.

The Shiite religious coalition, which won 48.1 percent of the vote and gained 140 out of the National Assembly's 275 seats, is expected to dominate the new government.

Some 8000 among the estimated 9,000 Filipinos working under United States military camps as well as the more than 100 others working outside were reported hurt in the attacks, which continued to hamper the evidence-gathering process.

"They're safe. We have no reports of casualties on the part of the workers. There's no bad news coming from our embassy in Baghdad," the official said.

Meanwhile, a low ranker of officials wanting the embassy in Baghdad, led by Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, continues negotiations to win the freedom of hostage Robert Tarongoy who was abducted more than three months ago.

Joint RP-US antiterror military exercises begin

By Christian V. Esguerra

SOME 650 Filipino soldiers and 300 American troops on Sunday began joint military exercises aimed at improving cooperation against terrorism and other attacks.

The two-week Balikatan 2005 military exercises, which will end on March 6, are to be held in military camps in Luzon.

The maneuvers are aimed at improving joint planning and enhancing capabilities "against all attacks, including those from terrorist groups, as well as readiness to respond to natural disasters," the United States Embassy said.

Part of the program are sessions on troop readiness to respond to natural disasters, the embassy added.

There will also be civic action such as medical, dental, veterinary and engineering projects in the training package.

The training on antiterrorism over the maneuvers was quite handy after the US State Department warned Americans in the country to remain on high alert due to possible attacks.

"Terrorist groups do not distinguish between official and civilian targets," the US department said in its Feb. 18 travel advisory.

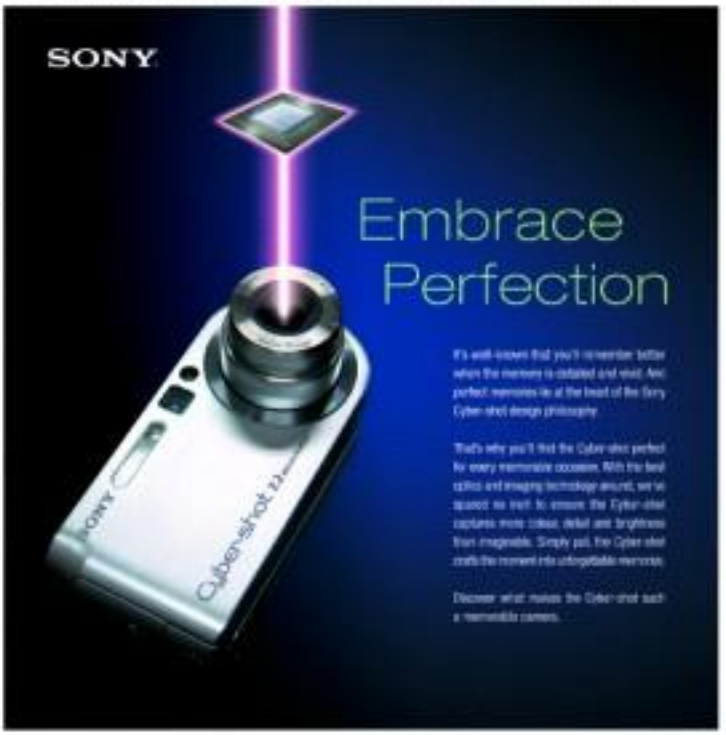
The warning was issued in the night following four bomb attacks that killed at least eight people and wounded 130 others in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos. The Abu Sayyaf claimed responsibility for the bombings.

The latest statement group managed to escape the attacks despite tight security measures then in place, especially in Metro Manila.

The Philippine National Police had admitted it had known of the planned attacks as early as December last year.

The Philippines is one of 26 allies in the global war on terrorism, and small numbers of US military advisers have been helping the government crush the al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf group.

With a report from AFP



Harsh gov't responses risk increased terror, say analysts

KUALA LUMPUR—Harsh government responses to Muslim separatist violence in Thailand and the Philippines risk drawing international terrorists more deeply into the region, analysts say.

Confirming to Muslim areas of Southern Thailand and the mainly Christian Philippines have been fueled by local issues but are getting increasing attention from Islamic militants outside the region, they say.

Arab militants supporting Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network have begun "highlighting the Thai issue," said Rohan Gunaratna, a terrorism expert with Singapore's Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies.

"Involvement of this conflict will mean greater involvement of other regional groups and global groups like al-Qaida."

The southern Philippines, where separatist conflict have raged for decades, already has a "permanent al-Qaida presence," Gunaratna told Agence France-Presse.

Increasingly, foreign combatants, particularly in Thailand, is "certainly a risk," said Robert Broadfoot of the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Consultancy.

"The grievances in southern Thailand are local but as we saw in Indonesia and the Philippines, al-Qaida and international groups have been able to take advantage of those local situations."

Thai Muslims have been subjected to increasingly draconian measures in what they see as a campaign of persecution by Thailand's Buddhist majority.

Thaksin has charged that militants seek refuge across the border in mainly Muslim Malaysia and even train in the jungles in the north of that country, accusations which have twice drawn rebukes from Kuala Lumpur.

In each of its meetings with Bangkok, Putrajaya has said Thailand should seek a special relationship with its Muslim neighbor, establishing common data bases on militants, setting up joint training and operations and sharing resources and experience.

"We are saying that the operational leaders and the spiritual leaders are shuttling through the porous border between Malaysia and Thailand but we do not see any Malaysian government support for these groups," Gunaratna said.

Broadfoot pointed out that "the Malaysian government has at least as much interest as Thailand does in not having this get out of hand." AFP

Bunye: Even US envoy . . .

(Continued from A1)

Bunye gave this advice to prospective American tourists after they asked him whether recent spate of bombings and suspected terrorist attacks on airports, garment factories and seaports in the country.

The state department urged Americans traveling or residing in the Philippines to exercise caution and maintain heightened security awareness because its citizens continued to receive reports of ongoing activities by terrorist groups.

It joined the warning on Friday following the Valentine's Day bombings in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos that killed eight people and wounded nearly 200.

Ten were killed in three blasts in the Philippines and six in the deadliest single bombing in Thailand's Muslim-dominated deep south, where separatist violence has claimed about 600 lives in the past 15 months.

Mr. Arroyo vowed to crush the rebel group she blamed, which claimed the Valentine's Day bombings, as well as the bombing of a Superferry boat in Manila Bay that killed 116 people and injured 300.

The new killed includes three Muslim rebels of Qaida links but added: "The government shall focus its operations against terrorist cells and those should be no fear of a witch hunt."

Thaksin, however, has unveiled a plan to cut some funds to villages deemed supportive of troublemakers in the south.

With Muslims already complaining of political and economic marginalization, critics say the move plan will simply make things worse.

Increased Muslim suffering could strike anywhere Thailand a fertile area for exploitation by terrorists and others, Gunaratna said.

"We can see then. I can track militants for the first time carrying images of the Thai flag and 'jihad' in which 37 Muslim detained rebels died, most of them through suffocation after being packed on the backs of army trucks.

"And we are seeing Arab pro-al-Qaida websites are highlighting the Thai issue, so certainly it is in the long term strategic and national interest of Thailand to resolve this problem as soon as possible."

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RP-Thailand

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and President Macapagal-Arroyo both pledged tough action against separatists in the wake of bomb attacks last week which killed a total of 16 people and wounded nearly 200.

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"This statement is an overkill or overreaction. Here nice officials are here and we are thanking totally with security. They are allowed their normal business and private activities," Bunye said in a statement issued over PBS radio.

Bunye noted that US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone even brought in some friends and relatives to spend the Christmas holidays in the Philippines.

"The bottom line is there are only a few reasons who follow these home country's travel advisories. Ambassador Ricciardone even said, 'Don't mind those advisories,'" said Bunye, who expects tourists arrivals to increase this year.

US ambassador in Cotabato

Despite the reported threats of more bombings, Ricciardone and local officials inaugurated the three-day a bridge that the US government said funding it a former rebel stronghold in Maguindanao.

Officials said the construction of the Pulandian bridge in Barangay Sarmiento, formerly Long Alcantara of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), was covered by the Growth for Equity in Mindanao, a program funded by the US Agency for International Development.

Ricciardone also visited a corn drying facility and witnessed the turnover of processed corn-seed varieties to an Islamic school, built in Cotabato City Barbara (20-Hundred project).

"What is important is to have tighter cooperation between the citizens and the police and local government authorities to guard the peace. But we should not protect our tourists," Bunye said.

Compare notes

Bunye said the United States should "compare notes" with the Philippines. "We have an arrangement for intelligence sharing," he said.

Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes asked the public not to be cowed by the state department's advisory.

"Go on living your normal lives. Don't be intimidated," Reyes said.

He asked the public to "be alert and provide information [to authorities]" even if to be assured that "all intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies are working."

Director Avelino Razon Jr., National Capital Region Police Office head, told reporters that his men had found another set of detonators used in the Makati City bombing.

He said the suspects were still in three Manila.

"We are racing against time. The longer the delay, the greater the risk of compromising the operation," Razon said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 21, 2005
2nd Week of Lent

1st Reading
Gospel:

Ezek 18:21-28
Luke 5: 36-39

Jesus said to the disciples, 'No one tears a piece from a new cloak to patch an old cloak. If he does, he will have torn the new cloak, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, and the wine will be lost, and so will the skins. No, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins. And no one, after drinking old wine, wants new; for he says, 'The old is good.'"

Commentary

Recently, a new vessel in our area, an ancient replica of the Holy One, sailing waters, breaking free grandly on all inside because of our disobedience of the law and our ignoring the cries of the prophets. We have rebelled against our God and our neighbors have endured a world and a nation that is sanctioned without unity, hope or peace to worship with integrity. We must have forgiveness for the mercy of God because of our sins, but we must also have the courage to change our ways. The answer we give, to judgment, to condemning others and to begrudging others as well as to giving ourselves, is others as the measure we will receive from the hand of Our Father. If help Our Father, make us straight of [the] mercy upon us, keeping us from death and make us repentant to others with mercy, to others with forgiveness, without judgment and with acceptance. Glory to everyone Jesus, your children who are sinners, Amen.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

Ex-solon in kidnap held

From page A1

napping—five cases in just six weeks, said the Cebuano duties Against Crimes, an anti-crime-watchdog Ang Kwentado.

"This year has been really bad," Ang-See said. "From a low last year, it seems kidnappers are hungry thirsty this year."

At one point during the haggling over a reduced ransom demand, the kidnappers told the boy's family that "they had killed him, and that it was too late," Ang-See told the Inquirer.

The boy's mother, on hearing it, fainted.

Delfin said the initial demand even reached a high of P2.9 million.

Poor homework

"But they didn't do their homework," Ang-See said. "What they apparently didn't know was that the mother's father died last year (but that) based on Chinese customs, she could not get any inheritance."

Chinese women usually do not inherit the wealth of their parents, she said. It is the men who do.

"So that meant she could not afford the ransom," she added.

The kidnappers were found out about this and reduced their demand to P50 million, then to P5.8 million, then P1 million and finally, P3 million.

Still, the family, which was now the phantom treasurer, could not afford it.

"They already sold cars, but still they could not raise the amount," Ang-See said. "The kidnappers, really overestimated the family's wealth."

At this point, she said the boy's family had no other choice but to seek assistance from the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Paner), the main PNP antikidnapping unit.

Amateur group?

A Paner team placed Roldan and company under surveillance before arresting them in a series of operations, Delfin said.

Throughout the boy's ordeal, his family was given no proof that he was still alive, police said.

Delfin said he was the kidnappers handled the kidnapping drama suggested that the group was now in the business.

Not sure, they didn't do a complete background check on their victim and his family's financial background, police said.

Ang-See said that it was during the haggling over the lowered demand that the kidnappers said they had already killed the boy.

"It was very traumatic for the family," she said.

Ang-See said that by then, the antikidnapping group had been able to trace the boy.

"The timeline had already limited ... He could not negotiate anymore the phones," Ang-See said. "So they concerned (in a rescue effort). They could not stand it anymore."

"This is a very sadistic group," Ang-See said.

Murder's up

Delfin said that throughout the negotiation, Paner operatives were mulling Roldan and the group.

On Saturday they caught the group at an apartment in 107-E Harvard St., Cubao, between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m., Delfin said.

Among the first to be arrested was Allen Magbanguan (alias Vincent Tinawid, he said).

A certain Adrian Carlos Domingo, alias Chog, was later arrested in Calamba, Batangas, he added.

During interrogation, Allen Caggal Roldan as the group's alleged mastermind, Delfin said, adding that Roldan later linked contain Ganera, a Quezon City barangay chair, in the abduction.

Investigators were still looking for a certain Suarez, Roldan's alleged girlfriend, who purportedly chose the boy as the target, Delfin said.

Too young to understand

Suarez is allegedly a friend of the boy's mother.

The child was asleep when he was handed over to his parents shortly after he was rescued.

"The family is very grateful ... They did not know if they could see another week," Ang-See said on the phone.

Quoting the boy's parents, she said the child seemed to be none the worse for wear. "Perhaps he is too young to understand it all," she said.

Penalty is death

Ang-See said the boy's rescue should serve as a warning to kidnappers.

"You really have to find another job," she said. "This is death penalty."

The police announcement said three men seized the boy at about 9 a.m. on Feb. 9 in front of Chef and Restore Cafe and Restaurant on Sapphire Road and Emerald Avenue in Pasig.

They took off in a waiting white Honda CRV van and sped off.

A witness said that before he was abducted, the boy was clinging onto his papa's (Amado's) hands on their way to his preschool.

Maid overpowered

When they reached the street corner, the CRV suddenly screeched to a halt near them.

The witness said at least one person got out of the car but that actually two men, with handguns, snatched the boy.

He said the maid wrestled for control of the child, but was overpowered.

On the same day, at about 9:30 p.m., the victim's family received a telephone call from a male caller, who introduced himself as Mang-Ed, and demanded ransom.

Fearing for the boy's life, his family initially did not want to cooperate with the police, an official said.

An investigator said the CIDG and its operatives had been sent just a few blocks away from the kidnapping scene three days before the abduction.

"When asked by a guard what they were doing there, they said they were construction. There is a fast-food chain being constructed nearby," the investigator said.

Cars switched

He said the abductors, who were last seen heading toward Robinson's Galleria, could have switched cars in any of the parking areas of buildings in the area.

The Pacer seized at least three vehicles in the operation against the kidnap group—a Mitsubishi L-300 van (TIP 8361), a green Mitsubishi Lancer and a Nissan (GJF-402).

Actor arrested, not abducted, say cops

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SEE GMC is the police narrating morning to report that he's husband had been abducted from their house by gunmen.

In the afternoon, police clarified matters.

No, Maria Theresa Gonzalez's husband, was not kidnapped.

The husband, Mitchell Gonzalez—also popularly known by his movie name of Bonnie Roldan and a former member of Congress—had, in fact, been arrested on suspicion of involvement with a kidnap-for-ransom gang.

The gunmen who broke into Gonzalez's house were not robbers or kidnappers but actually government agents, police said.

Gonzalez, 47, told the Batasan Hills Police Station she and her family were sleeping inside their house when, at about 5:30 a.m., more than 20 armed men barged in, destroying the main door.

The men dragged Roldan outside the house and took him away the wife reported.

She alleged that the gunmen also carried away their light blue Toyota Corolla, their cell phones and jewelry, including a Rolex watch she said was worth P600,000.

It was only later that police said that the "abduction" was actually an authorized police operation.

Central Police District director Dinnete Nadurean told the Inquirer the operation was legitimate.

The seven suspects detained by the police for alleged involvement in the kidnapping of a 3-year-old boy:

■ Mitchell Gonzalez y Yap alias Bonnie Roldan, 48 years old, married, businessman, former congressman of 3rd district, Quezon City and a resident of No. 1 Dodge St., corner Dona G., Filinvest II, Quezon City;

■ Ramon Ocejada y Nisay alias Robby, 43 years old, married, jewelry dealer, of Barangay Bagong Silangan, Payatas, Quezon City;

■ Rowena Wade y San Andres alias Weng, 27 years old, married, of Barangay Payatas, Payatas, Quezon City;

■ Noel San Andres y Caballing alias Manalo/Abad, 30 years old, married, driver and a resident of Barangay Payatas, Payatas, Quezon City;

■ Cesario Gacera y Feria, 53 years old, married, Barangay chair of San Roman, Quezon City;

■ Alberto Magbanguan y Nagay alias Vincent Tinawin, 27 years old, married, businessman and a resident of Purok 3, Zone 3, Kapalaran, Ayala, Batangas;

■ Adrian Domingo y Carlos alias Chog, 27 years old, married, painter of Zone 3, Kapalaran, Ayala, Batangas.

Loveseats on sale.

This Valentine month, Summit Club members can redeem two award tickets for the mileage of one!

Conditions:

1. From February 2 to March 15, 2005, all Summit Club members can redeem their award tickets for domestic routes of half the standard number of miles required. Please refer to the Award Travel Redemption Chart. Mileage tickets are valid for travel for 1 year.

2. All award tickets must be booked at least 5 days before travel.

3. The following award tickets cannot be redeemed during the promo period:
- Code-free, no-seat-offered tickets (to avoid the double-award scenario)
- Round Trip award tickets
- Round Trip Companion award tickets
- Any Gold Members awarding an economy ticket (any)

4. Request for award tickets during the promo must be submitted at least 7 days prior to scheduled departure date.

5. Travel of award tickets for the promo must be completed on or before March 15, 2005.

6. Rebooking is not allowed. Rebooking is subject to a dollar fee of 1.50 Pesos/dollars or PHP 75 (Php).

7. Promotional issuance may not be cancelled and reinstated to a member's account.

8. For inquiries or how to redeem the award tickets, log-on to Cebu pacific.com or call their numbers 1-800-1888-23-82 or 02-855-1731 for Manila.

Award Ticket Redemption Chart for Promo Period

Route	One-way	Round Trip	Round Trip Companion
Manila - Davao	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Dumaguete	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Cagayan	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Cebu	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Iloilo	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Zamboanga	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Tagbilaran	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Puerto Princesa	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Kalibo	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Tacloban	7,500	15,000	3,000
Cebu - Puerto Princesa	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Bacolod	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Ozamiz	7,500	15,000	3,000
Manila - Iligan	7,500	15,000	3,000
Cebu - Cotabato	7,500	15,000	3,000
Cebu - Davao	7,500	15,000	3,000
Cebu - Iligan	7,500	15,000	3,000
Cebu - Ozamiz	7,500	15,000	3,000
Cebu - Tagbilaran	7,500	15,000	3,000
Cebu - Zamboanga	7,500	15,000	3,000

CEBU PACIFIC Summit Club More Happy Returns

CEBU PACIFIC WE'RE GOING YOUR WAY

Bunye dispels fears of national ID system

UNEDGING in old ways of being a place for crime and shady characters, the Manila public cemetery will undergo a clean and green rehabilitation as announced by Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes and National Capital Region Police Office Director Avelino Razon. The program was launched during the historic celebrations of Rizal's...

Transcription of the remaining text:

official transactions, such as job or loan applications. But government could pick out terrorists hiding behind the public's cloak, say "flying names" and make workers here feeling Bureau said.

"So, what's so bad about that?" Bunye asked in view of the national ID system, including the President's allies in the Senate.

Senators Juker Arroyo and Francis Pangilinan are among those against the proposed national ID system.

Unconstitutional

Arroyo, who earlier warned that the system was an invitation for human rights violations, said it should not be made compulsory.

Pangilinan said the Supreme Court had already ruled on unconstitutional an administrative order similar to that President Ferdinand Marcos seeking to impose a national ID system in the country.

In a statement, he said any proposal seeking to have a similar ID system "has the real possibility of being invalidated again by the Supreme Court."

"Under the law, the 'clear and present danger rule,' the state has the right to prevent the use of measures or policies when these events a clear and present danger that will bring about undesirable evils," Pangilinan said.

"In using this principle, the Supreme Court recognized that the rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights of our Constitution may not be 'absolutely' (upset) by the state need ID system."

Pangilinan said "there needs to be more justification for the national ID system than what is being presented in the statement."

"If there is more evidence to establish how effective and beneficial the system could be, we can be more objective in fighting the war on terror, without infringing on basic human rights of the innocent majority," he said.

A member of the House of Representatives is proposing a bureau-type ID instead of a national ID.

"The national ID system will create false hopes [that it will be the] solution to terrorism," Taguig City Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano told reporters.

He noted that the Bureau of Internal Revenue had been computerized but it failed to track down corporate taxpayers. "Who don't we have a barangay ID system?" he asked.

After each barangay had implemented an ID system, then Congress could study the proposal, he said. "Encourage experimentation first then [see] problems later," Cayetano said.

Like 'cedula'

The Communist Party of the Philippines is also against a national ID system, calling it a "fascist tool to suppress the people and curtail civil rights."

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said "this reactionary US-Arroyo regime will use the proposed national ID system to suppress opposition to the regime and stifle resistance to its anti-people and pro-imperialist policies."

Rosal compared the proposed national ID system with the "cedula" during the Spanish colonial period, which was used to control people's movements and suppress resistance to colonial rule.

"This is tantamount to colonial-like regime," he said.

Rosal condemned the Senate subcommittee for using the Feb. 24 bombings as pretext for pushing fascist policies.

Pilot test areas

But Bunye said the ID system would not be an invasion of privacy.

"I just don't see how this can be an invasion of privacy when it is only to process the standard information that you give when applying for a job—date of birth, mother's name, father's name and school attended," Bunye said.

He said the government would not manipulate information in a person's ID. He said his card was "nothing information in that ID" all information is encoded within the barcode so information that you yourself filled up."

While Congress has yet to agree on whether to make the system an ID, said the ID system Bunye said the ID project would be "pilot-tested" in Metro Manila and the provinces.

In Bataan, Pangalinan, the Philippine and Cebu Philippines that the country system had already agreed to support the national ID system.

She said the mayors would lend in pushing for the passage of ordinances in their towns to implement local ID systems while Bataan—as the national ID system were going on.

But mayor Benjamin Magsaysay Cano, president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, said that the LMP had opposed the national ID system as early as 2003, and that their views had already remained local ID system.

Cano said LMP officials would discuss the matter at the annual convention when they meet on Feb. 26.

Bugging of phones

The Senate opposition bloc is calling to support a bill aimed at fighting the practice of illegal wiretaps that anti-libertarians are "not sacrificed on the altar of national security."

Senator Ellmerry Gordon Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said restrictive is more necessary to make sure that the constitutional rights of the people were not trampled upon.

In a statement, Pimentel acknowledged an increase of calls that "needed by this issue."

"I think he noted that senators from the majority and minority blocs would include these rules for an antiterrorism measure based on the wiretapping.

● It should not legitimize the bugging of telephones, the secret taping of e-mails or the wrecking of correspondence without court order.

● It should not exempt financial accounts without court order.

● It should not legalize the long-term indefinite detention by law enforcers of suspected terrorists by investigators.

● It should not legalize the sending of suspected suspected terrorists, if there are Filipinos citizens, to another country for investigation purposes unless covered by extradition treaties.

Supporters in Senate

Most senators yesterday came out to openly show support for a national ID system.

Senators Edgardo Angara, Manuel Villar Jr. and Ralph Recto joined his colleagues—senators President Pimentel, Pia Cayetano, Sen Lacson, Juan Ponce Enrile and Ramon Magsaysay Jr. in agreeing to the adoption of a national ID system in the country.

Malacañang for urged Congress to have hearings on forming a national ID system, but Bunye said the Palace could just issue an executive order to put the system into effect.

Angara supports a legislative measure so that the system can be implemented, saying that the system should restrain the report of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments in the last Congress that proposed to the adoption of a national ID system.

The draft report contains provisions of the issuance of all persons and human rights groups," Angara said in a phone interview that he had conducted several public hearings on the subject.

Specifically, he said an "all-purpose ID" would be beneficial to citizens. "One ID may be used for social security, employment and immigration purposes," he said.

He acknowledged though, the system could be abused by lawenforcers, but he said measures would be adopted to find the system would not be used for harassing people or violating their rights.

Villar, for his part, said he initially was opposed to a national ID system as it might be used to invade people's privacy. "But I heard out that many countries do have a national ID system," he said in a statement.

Makati's yellow card

Now, he said the proposal was not a bad idea. "The will pave the way for easy identification of foreigners and stop access to the backgound of our citizens," he added.

Recto told authorities to look into the "yellow-card" program in Makati City "for a prototype of a national ID card that would become as well-loved that people will not leave home without it."

Recto said he was for the "gradual evolution of the Philhealth card into the national ID card."

In a statement, Recto said that the Philhealth card was supposed to be the name of a national ID card when a 1995 law required its issuance to all Filipinos. Using the Philhealth card was much cheaper and the government would be able to "kill two birds with one stone, according to the senator.

In Baguio City, Bulacan Secretary Andrew Gatal said he thinks that the Palace was pushing for a national ID system to a certified administration bill that would complement or form part of Sen. Panfilo Lacson's antiterrorism measure.

Cruz said a Malacañang technical working group had drawn up a draft bill for their study that includes suggestions offered by others. *With reports from Nikko de Sotto-Fuertes, Vincent Cabreza and Pia and Cornelio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; and Sheila Crisostomo, Jhesset Enano and Cecille Suerte Felipe, PDI South-ern Luzon Bureau*

Shrine sanctuary . . .

church," recalled Mañosca.

"So, other ecumenical churches can celebrate our faith and gratitude to the almighty who helped us in our time of need. Because we were inspired [because of Edsa]," he said.

Mañosca's original plan was to construct a towering cathedral. However, he had to revise his design.

"The structure was massive," he recalled. "I had to design a structure that can be maintained since the project relied mostly on donations. I would be working on a small piece of property to fit 3,000 square meter corner lot donated by the families of Don Pio, Gil Puyat and Ayala. Gobongseon), and I also had to consider former Edsa Shrine rector Fr. Jaime Bulatao."

Despite the limitations, Mañosca adeptly conveyed his architectural style, calling on his years of designing residences and institutions all over the country.

However, he refused to compare the Edsa Shrine with other churches and chapels he had designed.

"I think that a church should not be compared with another. Each has its own character and 'ingenuing,'" said the architect, who designed the Santo Cristo de Burgos, the St. Joseph Church in Las Piñas City and the Assumption College Chapel in Makati City.

Place to meet

The whole Edsa Shrine concept was influenced by church plazas, to cite which were the ones from Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, said Mañosca.

"In most provinces, the church plaza is a place where people congregate: hold meetings or simply meet before going to or after Mass. That is what we have created at the Edsa Shrine," he explained.

The plaza is flanked on both sides by wide staircases, interrupted by landings across ramps. This lead to the hexagonal structure. The shape is generally employed to maximize usable space without the seemingly cumbersome of the Round Virgin Mary statue.

The second level of the plaza sits serves as stage for the annual programs that commemorate the two Edsa revolutions.

Inside the church

Like in all of his works, Mañosca incorporated design forms drawn from traditional architecture (represented by the bahay kubo [nipa hut] and the bahay na tisa [stone house]) and used local materials such as granite, capiz shell and the Ifugao region—to line the Edsa Shrine's interiors.

Capiz shells and Philippine hardwood were also used to decorate the church interiors.

The only two "imported" items in the church are the pipe organ (at the right of the main altar) and the Cardinal bells donated by the Irish government.

However, to break the monotony of clean walls surrounding the church, Mañosca designed four stained-glass portraits (portrayals) allowing sunlight to shine in.

"The amount of stunning pollution, the sheer feelings these sun rays feel and sense can [shining upon us] satisfied," he said.

Art and architecture

The said time you visit the Edsa Shrine, take time to appreciate works by the country's top artists.

"Another way of remembering the first Edsa revolution is to appreciate the contributions of the finest artists who lived their lives and talents in finishing the church," said Mañosca.

Speaking before churchgoers who stayed after the 7 p.m. Mass last month, Mañosca recounted the warm outpouring of support from artists who collaborated with him after the Edsa 1 mass was appointed by his and then President Corazon Aquino.

Top artists

"There's Virginia Ty Navarro's towering bronze statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The statue also the noble—as inspired by Blessed Sister Napoleon Abueva [who also did the statues of Bonifacio in Bonifacio shrine]," said Mañosca.

Also using the main altar is the image of the Risen Christ, a three-meter glass and bamboo and sculpture by renowned glass sculptor Francisco Guerrero.

Just above it is the stained-glass ceiling installed by Eduardo Castrillo, one of Asia's most progressive and original sculptors.

Renowned painters Ben Cabrera and his son Jaime did the mural in the church's Ante Jaime, "Virgin Mary, inspiring scenes in the life of the Sto Filipino mind.

Still within the Edsa Shrine is the Dagmical Adoration Chapel, also with works by Castrillo.

Historical landmark

Most of the artworks are in good condition, Mañosca noted, although some require restoration.

"The landmark work of Augusto Antolin and sculptor Nemesio Almeda Jr. [Nemesio, did you get here with the Augusto Antolin's most beautiful, I don't think I had anybody during the historic 1986 revolution," he said.

Mañosca, a contemporary of National Artist Leandro Locsin, said he wanted to raise public awareness on the importance of the Edsa Shrine.

"I don't want this church to end up like the City of Industrial Architecture in California City," he said, "where no one to and go see why no longer recall the significance of such a historical landmark."

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Casco

Israel poised to pull out settlers from Gaza

JERUSALEM—Israel's Cabinet met on Sunday in a pivotal session expected to give the go-ahead to evacuate Jewish settlers from occupied Gaza and for the first time remove settlements from land where Palestinians want a state.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to evacuate settlers starting in July has been called a possible step toward peace by both Israelis and Palestinians, buoyed by optimism after a Feb. 8 truce agreement.

But another Israeli Cabinet decision expected on Sunday—in its drive to create maps looping around major West Bank settlement blocs—was likely to add to Palestinian fears they would lose much of the West Bank that they also seek.

Cabinet approval for withdrawing the bulk of Gaza's 21 settlements and four of the 120 in the West Bank, already endorsed by parliament, would mean that settlers get the first months' notice they need as the legal clock ticks.

"The evacuation of settlements is a difficult step, a very difficult one," Sharon, once considered the godfather of the settler movement, told as he convened his Cabinet. "But it is a crucial step for the future of the state of Israel."

Officials and pundits said the vote should pass easily.

Sharon has fought for over a year to get his withdrawal plan past rightists who once saw Israel as the settlers' patron and are loath to cede land captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

Talk about moral hurdles unknown a withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, less ideologically loaded, say a pullout would be a "reward for Palestinian terrorism" and many settlers believe the land is a biblical birthright.

"There is no future in an Israeli presence in Gaza. It is not in our interests," Vice Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told Israel Radio. "It causes terror-stoking conflict that leads to blood and more terror."

Even if the withdrawal is approved on Sunday, opponents could use a pending budget vote to bring down the government.

Sharon is still trying to juggle efforts to back the budget that he fails by the end of March, new elections must be called.

Further Cabinet votes would also be needed to approve the four-phase settlement evacuation over the three years.

Israeli media said about 6,000 unarmed troops and police would be involved in removing each settlement. Settler leaders have urged nonviolent resistance, but security services have said there would still be bloody confrontations.

Concerns that withdrawals might be hampered by Palestinian militant attacks have receded somewhat since new President Mahmoud Abbas signed a ceasefire with Sharon. Fatalities have not formalized the agreement, but are keeping a de facto truce.

As part of a package of pro-Israeli gestures expected in its chiefs Israel's release of hundreds of jailed Palestinians, the army said it would allow 16 people deported to Gaza for "terror activities" to return to their homes in the West Bank on Sunday.

Israel's withdrawal from Gaza has been touted as a step toward reviving a US-backed "road map" that would lead to a Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel. Palestinians have agreed to coordinate with Sharon on some aspects.

But Palestinians remain worried that Sharon aims to abandon impoverished Gaza while holding on to far more populous West Bank settlements block that would deny them a viable state.

Palestinian anger is certain to grow if the Israeli Cabinet approves a final stage of the barrier route cutting to the biggest West Bank settlement, Israel says the border runs inside Jerusalem. Palestinians call it a land grab. The World Court has ruled the structure illegal. Reuters

FRID HAT LEADER

Sue Ellen Cooper, founder of the Wichita Society, holds her dog Fuzzy Fuk 14 at the Red Hat Society Inspirium store in Fullerton, Calif. The Society counts more than 800,000 members and 24,000 chapters in the United States. The women, who are mainly over 50, gather as sex chasers: have tea, play cards and in general do have a good time. AP

Half-million rally against fox hunt ban

STRATTON AUDLEY, England—Up to half a million hunters and supporters rallied across England and Wales Saturday in a massive display of force against a new fox hunting ban, vowing to reverse the controversial law.

From this southernmost county of Cornwall to the northern tip of Northumberland, riders with their hounds tested the legislation that came into force Friday while other people on foot were video-documenting the ban.

But animal activists called on hunters to learn to live with the rules and warned that a small number of prosecutions were likely to follow after they handed over videotaped evidence to the police, alleging violations.

Police said they had arrested four people in the southwest county of Wiltshire under the new law, which bans the hunting of foxes and other animals, but stressed the incidents—involving four dogs and a dead hare—was not connected to the organized hunts, which numbered over 200 across the country.

Dressed in red or black jackets, mounted on horses and with hounds yapping at their heels the men, women and children who took to the countryside looked and sounded like genuine hunters, just without the fox in full flight. AFP

Taped conversations give glimpses of next president

WASHINGTON—As George W. Bush was first moving into the national political stage, he often turned for advice to an old friend who secretly taped some of their private conversations, creating a rare record of the future president in a politician's unguarded moments.

In the last several weeks, that friend, Doug Wead, an author and former aide to Bush's father, disclosed the tapes' existence to a reporter and played about a dozen of them.

Variously earnest, confident or prickly in those conversations, Bush weighs the political risks and benefits of his religious faith, discusses campaign strategy and comments on rivals. John McCain "will wear thin," he predicted. John Ashcroft, he mumbled, would be a "very good Supreme Court pick" as a Bushism" vice president, and in exchanges about his handling of media questions about his past, Bush appears to have acknowledged trying marijuana.

Wead said he recorded the conversations because he viewed Bush as a historic figure, but he said he knew that the president might regard his actions as a betrayal. As the author of a new book about presidential childhoods, Wead could benefit from any publicity, but he said he was not a mercenary in disclosing the tapes.

The conversations Wead played offer insights into Bush's thinking from the time he was weighing a run for president in 1998 to shortly before he accepted the Republican nomination in 2000. Wead had been a liaison to evangelical Protestants for the president's father, and the conversion of religion and politics is a recurring theme in the talks.

BUSH AP

Preparing an more Christian leader in September 1998, Bush told Wead, "If you said, there are some side words. There are some proper ways to say things, and some improper ways." He added, "I am going to say that I've accepted Christ into my life, and that's a true statement."

Bush, who has acknowledged a drinking problem years ago, told Wead on the tapes that he could withstand scrutiny of his past. He said it involved nothing more than "pot, you know, cold beers." He asserted, though, that allegations of cocaine use would surface in the campaign and blamed his opponents for stirring up rumors. "If nobody shows up there's no story," he told Wead, "and if somebody shows up it is going to be made up." But when Wead said that Bush had in the past publicly denied using cocaine, Bush replied, "I haven't denied anything."

He refused to answer reporters' questions about his past behavior, he said, even though it might cost him the election. Defending his approach, Bush said: "I wouldn't answer the marijuana questions. You know why? Because I don't want some little kid doing what I tried." New York Times News Service

Thailand cloning dozens of breeding bulls, cows

BANGKOK—Thai scientists have cloned more than a dozen breeding bulls and cows since 2003 and expect to clone 50 more this year to improve herds amid a ban on US imports, the project's team leader said Tuesday.

Rangsun Chevapraphan, head of a research team at Kasetsart University of Technology in Thailand's northeast, said his team had successfully cloned 14 calves over the past 13 months.

They include seven cows produced with stem cells from the ear of Toon Tan, a red Brahman bull, that were implanted in the womb of surrogate mothers, and four female calves from cells from another red Brahman, named Bua, he said.

"All the calves are healthy, there is nothing wrong with them," he said AFP

One of them is cloned offspring, Bua 2, was to be presented to Thailand's Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, the king's daughter, when the princess begins events in the university on Monday, he said.

Cloning of a premium cow that can produce up to 6,000 kilograms of milk per year was also being undertaken at the university's farm in Chon Buri province.

"The cloning will help Thai farmers own high-breed cows on a low budget, as the country has banned imported beefs from the United States," Rangsun said. AFP

SPORTS

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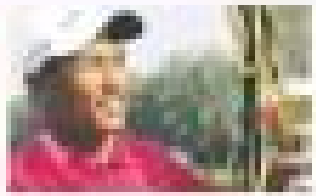
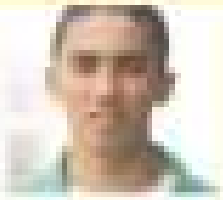
WHAT'S INSIDE





Younger brother urges Morales: Press the attack

By Robert L. Lagumbay, Contributor

UNLIKE Manny Pacquiao whose brother recently absorbed a mini beating inside Blackcoat Gym, Malaysia last month, Mexican lightweight boxer Diego Morales has a world-ranked featherweight brother to lean on for vital fight inputs.

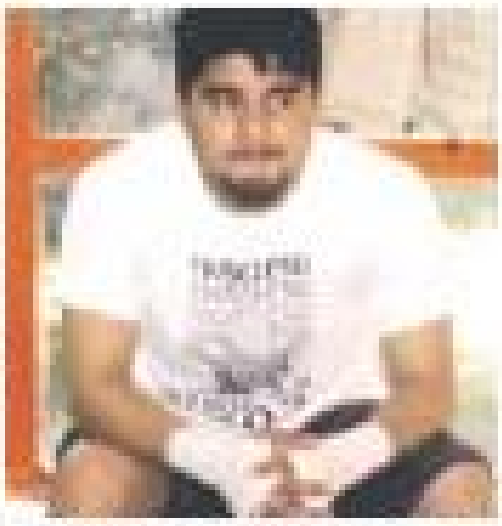
Diego "Niñito" Morales yesterday advised his more illustrious brother to imitate the action and take the fight to the Filipino hero when they clash at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas for their 12-round duel on March 19.

"It is [should move] toward Pacquiao's right side, and pressure the action," the 25-year-old southpaw, a former WBC super flyweight champion, told this Inquirer yesterday.

Good attacker

The younger brother of the Mexican legend, who is himself ranked WBC No. 1 and WBA No. 3 featherweight, added that Pacquiao is only good on the attack, but doesn't know what to do when he is on the defensive.

"Pacquiao is like a machine that throws shots, but doesn't know what to do when he is attacked," he explained.



DIEGO Morales gives it it a few tips against Pacquiao.

Niñito, who could be the key when both Morales brothers and Juan Manuel Marquez clashed in explained. The two Mexicans had been on the receiving end of Pacquiao's vaunted left until Barrera losing by TKO in 2003 and Marquez needing a big rally to salvage a draw last year.

The younger Morales is currently staying at the Ocean Mountains training facilities in preparation for the much awaited Pacquiao showdown.

Lean training team

For the first time in 18 years, the Mexican has been training without his vocal cord coach said to include a doctor, nutritionist, cook and physical conditioning coach.

This time, he has entrusted the team exclusively to his father-manager Jose Morales, his brother Diego, and trainer Fernando Fernandez.

Serving as Morales' sparmates at the Ocean Mountains training camp for Pacquiao are elite boxers Rodrigo Guerra, Fernando "Nary" Beltran, Jessie Saludar and Lupe Rangel.

Pacquiao training under Hall of Famer Freddie Roach in Los Angeles and relied on his younger brother Bobby, the reigning Philippine junior lightweight champion, how he is handled in the ninth bout for Pinoy in a Thai fighter Manny had demolished in 2003.

DIEGO Morales (above) should "move toward Manny Pacquiao's right side and press the action," says his kid brother Diego. →

P1-M All-RP Billiards Open starts

EFREN "Bata" Reyes sets up in his favorite...

THE HOPE P1 Million All-Filipino Billiards Open kicks off this afternoon at the studios of IBC 13 on Broadcast Center, Quezon City.

From Sports.com.ph Aniceto "Nick" Pantaleon Jr. Television president Mark Reyes will make the ceremonial break to start the seven-day event held in cooperation with the Games and Amusement Board (GAB) and sanctioned by the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) headed by its president Ramon Reyes.

"Into the best players we, Lyka's more spice to exaggerating, emphatically long short-long after-ing breaker to break [All of them are good, but the player who gets] looks as the break has the edges," said Reyes.

The tournament sponsored by Hope, Pale Ti Tent and Smart seven as one of the qualifying phases for players competing for the Philippines seats to the Southeast Asian Games (SEAGA) this November.

The 9-ball event will have a seven-9-8 semi-finals format and a double-elimination system—eight in a standard elimination loser.

Efren "Bata" Reyes is a heavy favorite to win the event and the P600,000 top prize based on his recent performances abroad.

The 30-year-old Reyes, from Angeles City, Pampanga, broke from winning the 1-pocket and 9-ball crowns of the 2005 Derby City Classic in Louisville, Kentucky, will face unbeatable Cesar Duelo, a 25-year-old from Moncada, Tarlac, in his first match.

Reyes would fix 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who won $1,0,000 in topping the 2005 Predict 10th Gold Open in Oklahoma, will be pitted against former member are Jessie Silva of Manila.

The other opening matches pit reigning world champion Alex Pagulayan against Roberto Gr. 2003 Vietnam SEA Games double gold winner Lee Van Corteza, veteran member member are Ivan Gonzales, Marlon Manalo against 20-year-old Arthur De Luna, Leonardo Andam against Candy Jella, Warren Kiamco against Antonio Lucas and Rodolfo Luat against Lopez Avalos.

The matches will be aired on IBC 13 from 8 to 10:30 p.m.

The top finisher in the last 16 outside of Reyes, Bustamante and Corteza will make it to the Sun Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour.

The winner up will get P200,000 while the third and fourth placers will each receive P50,000. Other prizes are P30,000 each for fifth and sixth, P20,000 each for seventh and eighth and P12,000 each for ninth to 16th. Matches format days. Cue a choice

WARMING Garcia is the usual debutante.

Hoya's Pacquiao vote not valid

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

OSCAR De La Hoya's statement stated that his heart beats for Manny Pacquiao deserves thankful applause.

That could decision isn't to properly sweet out hopes and prayers.

The vote should help boost the confidence of Pacquiao, expected to be pushing positively at the Mid Card Boxing Club in Hollywood via his 10th-D. 19 encounter with Mike Arnaiz via Bob Morales.

It's actually incredible. Why in the first places, would a legendary warrior, an actual boxer, go against his fellow Mexican who'll agree allow lug in full force at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas come month to score the Mexican Big notch ally behind Morales?

What De La Hoya had declared could be close to sedition, if there's such an offense in boxing.

Of course, coming all the way from the camp of the Golden Boy, that's spleen of great sense for Filipino boxing fans.

But what is There's a little problem here.

If you did not notice, De La Hoya failed to explain why he picked Pacquiao over Morales.

All De La Hoya, a former world champion in six divisions, blasted way, "I like Pacquiao."

If he is only preparing to discomfort luck, that would be fine.

He need to offer a handful of years. He need to elaborate.

The information would have been perfectly expressed.

But this is boxing. You don't just pump into confusion. You don't even party lines with an vital reason.

Honestly, I had to ask our trusted boxing correspondent, Salvio Lagumbay, if De La Hoya had bothered to explain his vote.

Negative. It was all Hoya had said, as reported in Boxingtalk website chat line.

Problem is we could not leave De La Hoya to elaborate.

Pal, Cheddie, counting that pin-Pacquiao vote needed.

I could be mistaken.

If De La Hoya came to the website and explains that Pacquiao is younger, stronger, listens tougher, I'd say he is reliable.

Salvio's point is he hasn't been and we should take caution not to get blinded.

Anyway, looking closely, it's easy to suspect Hoya's pro-Pacquiao statement was based on the Ramos Factor.

Yes, Marcos Antonio Barrena who, after losing supposed the votes, surprised Prince Naseem Hamed, last year dethroned crowd-pleasing Bob Morales as world super featherweighting.

De La Hoya obviously feels that, instead of a possible Morales Barrena/G. o Pacquiao duo will eatmeth would be a sure bout seller.

Hoya's Golden Boy outfit handles Barrera and Team was surely eyeing a rematch in pitching for a Pacquiao win come March 19.

Anyway, love or losses, there's this startling statement that Morales would prevent a month against Pacquiao.

And, mind you, this is one being fueled by ethnic issues. Freddie Roach had said that Morales, 28, a bobcat and sawy.

No, in the fight terms, the two continues to swear that Pacquiao would prove strong and superior to Morales.

It's like this. Morales sees losses by Barrera, Pacquiao, on the other hand, had stopped Barrera. So how could Morales be any better than Pacquiao, who had beaten Morales' conqueror?

That is the question, the matters, chained daily by my little window friends to be sure of sage values I may use when needs arise days a week.

As simple as that, continue go as rumored rumor they make.

That would also be the same concern why Pacquiao was promptly installed the favorite in the Las Vegas betting lines.

Morales, love to Barrera on points, while Pacquiao had beaten Barrera by knockout.

There's always the overwhelming Ramos Factor.

Well, at least, unlike from De La Hoya, no mathematics formula in the Bob master have to have to have information on something tonight.

The problem, I believe, is that it would be as simple as that to comprehend.

Honestly, I've to run the fight even.

Morales, the classic bobcat, is better seasoned and definitely more skilled.

Pacquiao, born fighter, has the bigger punch but he could stop his next opponent.

The winner must be able to surpass himself.

FINAL NIGHT: The next stage is time for the senior interscholastic edition Isaac Camino, 12, will be held tonight, 6-11p.m., at the Holy Trinity Chapels, St. Andrews streets, 2nd floor, in Isaac, Sampaguita. Rained will be on Tuesday morning at the Manila Memorial Park, at 10:30 a.m. Mass at Holy Trinity. Thanks and goodbye, pero'o manalo.!

Buenavista, Manipol run true to form in dzMM 10K

GUINAVETA Lenore Buenavista and Rodolfo Manipol, the reigning and queen of best middle distance running, are seen here during the 6th dzMM Teleradyo Fun Run 10K yesterday in the Quezon Greenbelt.

Buenavista, a two-time Olympian who also holds the Philippine record in the half marathon, and Manipol, who has set his sights on a third straight title and perfect the P50,000 top prize each.

Buenavista, sponsored by Isetan 10-K runner-up Rose of 35 minutes and 1 second.

"I need to run 29:00 to be REAL," said Buenavista, who will represent the country in the 5K, 10,000 meters and the 42km Chivalry Marathon Asian Games this November.

Nino Herrera was in second at 30:40 while Bernardo Decastro settled for third at 32:04.

Manipol, who will also run in the REAL 5,21 and 10-K events, completed the course in 27:21. His closest pursuer was Lea Delle who timed 42:06.

The veteran Milo/Nat runner is from Isla.

Yesterday's event was held in partnership with Philcox Petroleum Corp., Nike Phils. and the National Park Development Committee. The proceeds of the event will help rehabilitate the Lolibon Dam watershed.

The top three finishers in the men's 42km run were Alby Dalaca (11:07), Ronald Arellano (1:1:25) and Jordan Cherry while the 42km Women's race was won by Gloria Ramos (20:28), Ada Rose Robes (20:51) and Christina Delila (20:55).

The winners in the Golden 50-52 Division event were Jose Angeles (1:14:42) and Jovencio Magpantay (1:24:44).

EU charter faces test in Spain

MADRID, Spain—The European Union constitution listed in fine print as the grass roots level begins as Spaniards started voting on it in a referendum, with the prospect of low turnout threatening to get the landmark document off to a sluggish start.

Both of Spain's major parties back the charter and passage was expected, but the government has acknowledged that turnout might be very low, saying it would consider 35 percent reasonable. The referendum is nonbinding, with Parliament having the final say.

All 25 EU countries must ratify the constitution for it to take effect. Three have done so through their parliaments and Spain is the first of 13 holding referendums.

More than 200,000 police were on duty to provide security around the country as voting got underway at 9 a.m.

The document, approved by EU leaders in October is designed to streamline EU decision-making as the bloc expands eastward, making it more efficient and giving it global clout on par with its economic might.

The rest of Europe was watching the Spanish vote closely because in several countries also due to hold referendums this year or in 2006, including British and France, passage is not considered a foregone conclusion and governments were loath to set a good example.

As campaigning concluded Friday night, Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said the vote is as important as a 1978 referendum in which Spaniards approved their own constitution, ending a democratic diarchy three years after the death of Gen. Francisco Franco.

"Now we have another historic opportunity and must not squander it," Zapatero told a rally in Madrid. "We cannot miss the opportunity to be protagonists and set the course for all Europeans with a massive 'yes.'"

Zapatero has said Spanish approval of the document would be a natural progression for a country that was a relative latecomer to what is now the EU and has benefited greatly from membership, in everything from aid funds to culture and science.

Concerns over low turnout stem from the fact that Spaniards tend to be overwhelmingly apathetic about EU voting unless ballots coincide with a national election. In last June's European Parliament elections, turnout was 45 percent, compared with more than 70 percent in the country's general election three months earlier.

If participation on Sunday is low, even if the charter is approved, it could be seen as straddling one of the starting gate. Analysts say this would delight Euroskeptics in Britain and elsewhere, and could lead to a domino effect that might sink the constitution altogether.

Low turnout would also raise the question of what kind of mandate Zapatero would have if and when he goes before Parliament within a week approved constitution in hand.

Last week he said he considered the referendum politically binding, even though legally it is not. "I will respect the majority opinion of the Spanish people," Zapatero said, suggesting that if voters rule the constitution, he won't submit it for a vote in Parliament. He did not elaborate on the pledge. AP

AN ELEPHANT OF A PAINTING

Elephants paint on this canvas during a new Guinness record attempt at one of many rejuvenate painting by elephants at Maesa elephant camp in Chiang Mai province northern Thailand, Feb. 19. The elephants used acrylic colors on the 2.4 m by 6 m (106x) called "Wind, Mist, Lions Charm Number One." The painting sold for $31,000, with the proceeds going to a pachyderm

SPUTNIKNEWS AP

A YOUNG boy holds a portrait of Nepali King Gyanendra during a welcome and support rally in Kathmandu Feb. 20. Social groups, schools and volunteers organized a peace rally in the capital supporting the king's decision to assume absolute power. AP

Nepal king's gamble takes unexpected turn

By Neelesh Misra

KATHMANDU, Nepal—Nepal's destiny is being shaped by two men who command thousands of fighters—one from a palace, the other from somewhere in the mountains.

From the Narayanhiti Palace, King Gyanendra struck a risky move this month, sacking the government, declaring an emergency and placing an iron grip on the tiny nation of 25 million—in a bid to take the past not controlled by cadres of the guerrilla leader in the mountains, who likes to call himself "Prachanda" or "the feared one."

But more than three weeks on, the king's ploy is not entirely playing out by the book. The country's unpopular politicians are sidelined and public opinion is sure if not satisfied—but in closest allies India, the United States and Britain have expressed their unhappiness and worries and donors are threatening to pull out.

"It doesn't look as if things are straight yet. There are complications," said Tsering Khamsar, editor of Nepalese weekly Samay. The international community has viewed very differently from what he thought."

Gyanendra justified the Feb. 1 royal takeover by saying it was a move against Maoist rebels fighting to establish a communist state and corrupt and inefficient politicians.

He called it a last-ditch attempt to restore order in Nepal, which has faced multiple crises since it became a constitutional democracy in 1990. That was when violent nationwide protests forced King Birendra, Gyanendra's late brother, to give up absolute power after two centuries of autocratic rule.

Many in Nepal suspect Gyanendra wants those powers back.

"The ultimate objective of the king's action is to obtain powers that were taken away by the people's movement," said Ram Saran Mahat, a top leader of the largest party, the Nepali Congress.

The advent of Nepal's multiparty democracy came at the end of a 10-year authoritarian reign by Gyanendra's father King Birendra and later his brother King Birendra, a time known as the "Panchayat" when political parties were banned and civil liberties were limited.

King Gyanendra's Feb 1st said that he will restore democracy in three years but the fears with which he has pushed his government are all proponents of the Panchayat era. They hate the multiparty system," said Dhamkar.

But Nepal's politicians have also lost much credibility over the 15 years that they have been in power, with frequent squabbles, government changes and corruption allegations.

During the emergency, many have been placed under house arrest, others have fled, and the handful that remain find themselves marginalized and irrelevant. AP

Threat of bird flu epidemic a 'sword of Damocles'—UN

[illegible]—The deadly bird flu epidemic, [illegible] which have hit several dozen countries and killed 40 people since 2003, is a "sword of Damocles" hanging over the world, a top UN official said Sunday.

To prevent the further spread of the disease to [illegible] countries and long-term action, director of animal health at the Food and Agriculture Organization, Joseph Domenech, said.

Considering the virus will be the focus of a regional conference beginning Wednesday in Vietnam's southern economic capital of Ho Chi Minh City.

"I've come to Cebu today for the international community to see how the virus constitutes an enormous sword of Damocles in terms of public health and the rural economy," Domenech told AFP during an interview.

"The conference in Ho Chi Minh City has to acknowledge this so we can take both urgent action and long-term measures against the disease."

The H5N1 virus has already forced the culling of millions of birds to stem and killed people in Vietnam and Thailand.

Mr Domenech said Asian and Western countries were prepared last year to consider themselves clear of the virus, even as scientific studies had proven it was still circulating in the region.

"Many countries believed that the problem had been resolved, particularly after declarations from China, Vietnam and Thailand saying the virus had been eradicated," he said.

"But we know that this [the virus] could be carried by animals which don't develop the disease," meaning that it could remain in the environment without being formally detected.

Maintaining a worldwide awareness was complex as the human death toll was to the limited, Domenech said.

The international community had been easy to mobilise after the tsunami that killed hundreds of thousands in Asia in December, but it was harder to organise on a long-term basis for avian influenza, he said. AFP

FERRY DISASTER

Bodies to be retrieved after recovering a relative's body from a ferry disaster near Dhaka, Feb. 20. Police divers and local rescuers recovered at least 19 bodies on Saturday after the ferry carrying around 500 passengers capsized during a cyclone overnight in Buriganga River, about 15 km from capital Dhaka. —PTI

Stash found in Belfast linked to big bank heist

BELFAST—Irish police for the first time Saturday linked a stash of stolen money found in Belfast with a spectacular bank robbery in the city last December as suspicion about IRA involvement in the crime grew.

The Irish government has accused the Irish Republican Army of having a hand in the two-thirds Irish robbery as well as moving to launder cash.

But Gerry Adams, head of Irish Peace—the political wing of the paramilitary Irish Republican Army—denies any connection to the probe, which has so far detained eight suspects and netted some 2.3 million pounds (3.3 million euros, $4.4 million) as well as documents and computers.

Six of the detainees have since been released.

Police confirmed that 69,000 pounds found in the toilets of the Iveagh police station in Belfast Friday were linked to the bank raid.

But they hinted that the discovery, which was sparked by an anonymous tip-off, might be a false lead.

"This could be an elaborate ploy aimed at directing attention away from the events elsewhere over the last few days," a spokesperson told AFP on Friday.

Officials in both Belfast and Dublin blame the IRA for stealing 26.5 million pounds from the Belfast bank on Dec. 20.

Sinn Fein strongly denies the allegation, which has thrown efforts to end crippling power-sharing government in the British province into disarray. AFP

US, Japan express 'deep concern' over North Korea

WASHINGTON—The United States and Japan expressed "deep concern" Saturday over North Korea's nuclear weapons program and declared Taiwan a common security concern in the face of a Chinese military build-up.

The two allies capped talks here between their foreign and defence ministers with pledges to work for peace in Northeast Asia against various threats to regional stability.

A joint statement by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her Japanese counterpart, Yoriyuki Machimura, expressed the most vivid Bush Kuni's Feb. 18 announcement it had produced nuclear arms and would focus on the talks.

"The US secretary of state and the Japanese foreign minister share deep concern over the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) foreign ministry statement," the parties said.

The statement by the DPRK only further isolates it from the international community and runs counter to the efforts by the parties concerned to peacefully resolve the nuclear issue through the six-party talks." Neither the Americans nor the Japanese offered any indication of movement to break the deadlock over the negotiating table. But both blamed a possible new nuclear test on against the nuclear Stalinist regime's ruined army.

"Should we let the train slip, then I think it will only worsen the situation, because the new the international community will be come tougher towards North Korea," Machimura said.

Rice said: "The North Koreans are the ones that are isolated in this, and they ought to reassess those risks to their people don't have to contemplate other outcomes."

Besides their diplomatic arms into speeches, but their joint statement reiterated their commitment "to continuing to seek a peaceful diplomatic resolution of the nuclear issue" through negotiations. AFP

INQUIRER

OPINION

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Open City

THE BATTLE for Manila 60 years ago did not change the course of World War II or hasten its end. It did not inaugurate a new phase in the Pacific campaign or create a military breakthrough. But it was marked by unspeakable atrocities and plumbed new depths of human suffering. For that reason alone, it deserves to be remembered, not only in the country but around the world.

EDITORIAL

The incomparable success of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's leapfrogging strategy had put Allied forces within unending distance of Japan two years after the fall of Bataan. Japanese outposts had famously withered on the vine, left behind without supply lines and reinforcements as the Allies attacked some islands and skipped others.

The ironic consequence of MacArthur's success was that it threatened to make his celebrated promise to return to the Philippines militarily irrelevant. American commanders at the highest levels asked: Why not skip the Philippines altogether? Their protected lines of operations for an invasion of Japan was Taiwan, then known as Formosa.

When the Philippine plan finally prevailed, the stage was set for nine of the most heartrending stories in the annals of warfare.

On the day of what survivors still call liberation, more Filipinos died in a single series of events than at any other time in history. The Battle of Manila was instantaneous in its devastating impact: More than 100,000 died in the four weeks of fighting between Feb. 3 and March 3, 1945. Most of them relived Rizal's nightmare: that is, they died without seeing freedom dawn.

The hopeless series in the last two weeks drew an indelible portrait of that horrific experience: Many of the dead were consumed in an orgy of violence, stirred by Japanese naval troops stationed in Manila and under orders to defend what was then the largest occupied city in Japan's so-called Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Many more were killed in an unending rain of fire: the American' massive and unrelenting artillery bombardment. Many others died simply because they were caught in the indiscriminate flames of crossfire.

We honor all of them by remembering their ordeal, their holocaust. But we honor them best by honoring those who survived them.

For every story of a baby bayoneted in the air, we must remember those who survived with desperate cunning, those who pleaded dead, for instance, even when Japanese soldiers kicked them to make sure they were dead.

For every story of a family trapped by a collapsing, bomb-weakened wall, we must remember those who dug holes or helped others find trenches, leaving shrapnel or debris as their missions of mercy. The heroic roll, thankfully, goes on and on.

By praising them, we don't simply mean to ease their "survivor's guilt." By recognizing their pluck, their power under intense pressure, their sheer will to live, we honor that which makes up truly human.

At a time of unbreakable anguish, when the line separating most from beast was crossed again and again, the constant example of human beings doing uncommon things was a sign of hope. Despite the horrors of war, in a city that should have been by all lights declared open a second time since 1942, it was possible to imagine life as it ought to be once again.

Much remains undone

WHILE much hope is being placed on the Kyoto Protocol, much remains undone. Although the target of reducing greenhouse gases has already been set for the first phase of less than 5 percent starting in 2008, the countries concerned have many matters to deliberate for the long-range plan.

Historically, the United States is cited from the genesis of industrialization as the world's carbon dioxide or CO2. Incidentally, the carbon particulates gave rise to the phenomenon of what would be called, it is rationalized, that the greenhouse gases produced in the United States and other countries, as well as the United States, be regurgitated in one way or another in the ozone hole/layer of the Ozone Protocol.

FOREIGN COMMENT

Jacob Maslog

Jacob Maslog is a former senior executive of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and a former Inquirer columnist. He is currently a professor of communication research at the University of the Philippines Diliman.

The incomparable success of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's leapfrogging strategy had put Allied forces within unending distance of Japan two years after the fall of Bataan. Japanese outposts had famously withered on the vine, left behind without supply lines and reinforcements as the Allies attacked some islands and skipped others.

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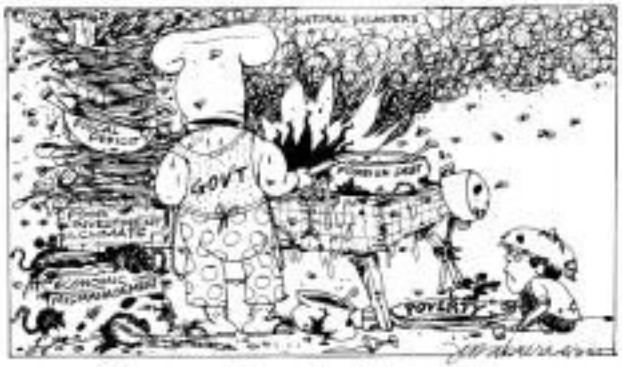

Of cops and 'counterfeit' medicines

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

A SUSPECTED dealer in fake medicines was arrested in a fast-food restaurant in Timberland Heights, San Pedro, before the weekend, while the Department of Health revealed that 30 percent of medicines sold in drugstores and pharmacies in the Davao region are fake. Around 95 million worthless medicines were sold in the region last January. The capsules were filled with sawdust, others were expired medicines, dirt, expiration dates altered. Samples obtained from Davao drugstores contained salt and flour.

The manufacturers and distributors of fake medicines should be given long prison sentences because they put the lives and health of patients in peril. Fake medicines have been long been a problem here, one reason for this may be high rents at storefronts sold by multinational pharmaceutical companies. Many years ago, a nervous manufacturer of fake medicines, many of which had no value for the medicine they were supposed to cure, approached me and had plenty of money to bribe officials. He had many friends in at least one investigating unit and he even wanted some protection from the investigating officer of the Daily Inquirer. He wanted me to meet him at a place reserved to me by girlfriend, a very pretty woman. One night this girlfriend came to the investment alone and after some small talk turned over P10,000 to me. I told her that I was endowed. Of course, I did not bite the bait.

That was how the guy operated and the police could not do anything with him. Two days ago, police operatives called in to say that the fake medicine dealer was in a fast-food restaurant on Quezon Boulevard with a police team led by then Manila police chief Alfredo Lim. He was not somewhere similar to that of Dr. Pepe Rizal's wife, Josefa Ibe previously, could not be found by the police. He had to be summoned to the police station. He also was unable to produce a Mikhail Gail Ty Pobre's Barbara, then a police detective. He also was unable to produce a certificate of registration. He could be allegedly grabbed a guard and tried to escape. He was then detained in the police.

Another item became suspicious and then

Right and wrong

There's the Rub

Gemma de Quiros

I MISSED my sources last week about the Indonesian's five minutes. I couldn't understand how the Muslims, which was reported to have claimed the dead, could have done it. Last we heard, they had gotten much more wiped off the face of the earth. They had lost their key people, they were on the run, how they could plan bombs to key areas and set them off simultaneously seemed to strain credulity.

On the other hand, it is said here the Moro National Liberation Front, or the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, why would they want to do it? Renewed hostilities with the government would severely hit us with the 10 centimeters of the Philippine economy. Renewed hostilities the government's anti-terrorist threats, which is periodically issued to soothe us with the fear of a fresh pattern with the public. And it has been losing big, with foreign investors fleeing the territory in the land of Mindanao. Renewed hostilities damaged by foreign creditors, and the public investment for a proposed VAT increase.

The bombings looked like a "wag the dog" scenario, or government producing terror to increase some very likeable Lily producers' movies, in a normal year, it wasn't as at all. This was what I pondered.

The bombings were made by the headhunters of the Muslim groups. What triggered it was a series by government troops at militants in Mindanao, particularly held to an MNLF "area of control." A heated exchange ensued between the duly-elected councilor and the leader of the troops. Fearing for their safety the councilor opened fire, killing the councilor, his son, his two children, and his brother. The councilor was reported to be a member of the Muslim MNLF official. The entire Muslim community protested the incident, to no avail. The official military version was that the troops had encountered a renegade band.

Fanning over the territory, the MNLF and its allies awakened by making a military camp. Fanning further over their native being deployed as caused by the loss of "the Ulama's order" from "to the terrorists' wrought upon them by

senior member chief, Lim, is now also a popular senator, proof that good cops who really fight criminality, the best they can be rewarded with high office.

Why am I telling this? Because the police men were not so different, and I note the old days. Many policemen there were involved in criminals. When a police person was killed, the order to every cop was: "Leave everything else, get the killer!" The cop killer usually had less than 24 hours to live. His or others hunted before he hunted at the date was.

These days, policemen are assassinated, but no suspects in the killings are arrested. Cops are not treated as saints—but be criminals or to disrepute, as little as PNP self-esteem were not given the courage. A totally different spirit is formed by the noble endeavors of the Metro Manila Development Authority. The law enforcers formed, after Lim and Bautista, was Danilo Lucas, who has become with the chief of the Philippine National Police. He is now also a senator, one more proof that good cops go places. Congress likewise the present crop of policemen.

But getting back to fake medicines, I wrote that the word being used in the press release and news reports is "counterfeit." By legal definition of the World Health Organization, imported genuine medicine of the same content and quality as those locally manufactured have not included in the label "counterfeit." Therefore, the word counterfeit the less expensive medicines imported by the Philippine government, and to give Filipinos an alternative to the high priced medicines manufactured here by multinational companies. Filipinos are thus

being frightened from buying that cheaper government imports by the propaganda campaign of the Coalition Against Fake Medicines.

I am all for informing the people about fake medicines, and the coalition should be congratulated for its campaign. But its information drive is incomplete. It does not clarify that the cheaper medicines being imported and sold by the government's own Philippine International Trading Center are not fake medicines. It has nowhere about this in two previous releases, but I have yet to read a press release or clarification on this from the coalition.

Spoil is not true that the DOH, supported by the Department of Trade and Industry, is the lead agency in the propaganda campaign of the coalition. The DTI is a subsidiary of the DOH. The propaganda is against the importation of cheaper medicines—not only medicines, and the other manufacturers of the medicines of all the foreign-owned pharmaceuticals here—and a quiet drugstore chain. The DOH and DTI and the coalition claim that they had to join the coalition, a professional public relations agency in doing the propaganda work.

Some people suspect that the sudden campaign against "counterfeit" medicines was prompted by the PITC's parallel importation of medicines which could cut into the multinationals' 80 percent hold on the Philippine drug market. The imported medicines are very much cheaper many of these less than half of the prices of those made here. If the imported medicines are not the target of the coalition's propaganda, why is there no clarification to make everything clear, as all information campaigns should?

We should all fight fake medicines (and dare to no doubt that there are many of them here), but we should not be fooled or to legitimate government imports that are meant to give Filipinos access to cheaper medicines.

Editorial Cartoon by Jess Abrera

View from the Muslim minority

THE BUSHFIRE move to institute a national ID system, which is supported by President Macapagal-Arroyo and led by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, much as Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, has revived the debate on the wisdom of adopting it. The advocates are pushing it as a practical defense against terrorism. On the other hand, Senator Joker Arroyo and Francisco Pangilinan represent a no-a-mile-ous of the people's civil rights, such as their right to privacy. All this time, the debates over the ID system has been conducted from the point of view of those who need to be "protected" from terrorism. But there's another viewpoint that probably has not been amply taken into account—that of the Muslim minority, from whom ranks the terrorists are supposed to spring.

* * *

A news item in the Manila Standard reported that in Cotabato, Quezon City, where a large Muslim community thrives, Muslim residents are for the use of the ID, saying "it will protect them from illegal arrests, harassment and victimization." The residents were quoted as saying that they have nothing to hide and that as legitimate residents of a community that, they said, has been "unfairly tagged" as a haven for terrorists and criminals.

* * *

This mood of the Cotabato Muslim community gives the other side of the issue—a national ID could help protect minority groups and members from "legal" physical harassment. One drawback, of course, is that in this country anything can be cloned, and abusive police elements can use the ID to harass Muslims (or anyone else, for that matter) the ID they carry to him. But if you ask me, I think there are more benefits than disadvantages to be derived from having a national ID system. We just have to live with the possible abuses and seek to minimize them.

* * *

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez is the kind of official who doesn't seem to be daunted by contrary opinions. He believes in speaking out his mind and calling a spade a spade, almost reminiscent of the outspokenness to himself.

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

such as having a tough time at the Commission on Appointments which he will face soon. I think Gloria like him might to be supported by the public.

Recently, Gonzalez was quoted as saying that transporting detained MNLF chief Nur Misuari from his Fort Sto. Domingo cell in Laguna to the House of Representatives to attend a hearing on the recent outbreak of hostilities between his loyal followers and the Armed Forces would be a very risky thing to do. Party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo said a few other lawmakers from the group had earlier filed a resolution inviting to compel Misuari to attend such a hearing. Gonzalez opined that while he cannot prevent Misuari from appearing in Congress if summoned, it would be better if the lawmakers, for security reasons, traveled to Laguna to hear him out. PNP Chief Edgar Aglipay broke the same logic for the lawmakers go to Sto. Domingo instead.

* * *

Gonzalez and Aglipay are absolutely right at the very least an attempt to free Misuari while in transit could have put people on both sides. If his lawmen succeeded in rescuing him, it would be only to increase international embarrassment the Philippines doesn't need. As for Ocampo, I must confess that I am disappointed with some of his actuations in recent months. First, there was his support for the Hacienda Luisita "strikers" instead of the Department of Labor and Employment that was trying to mediate between the two sides and uphold the rule of law. Surely, Ocampo must realize the danger of transporting Misuari to Congress. I campaigned hard for Ocampo the first time he ran for the Senate under the party-list system because I believed that the House would use the presence of the progressive elements, which would serve as the check-needed counterpoint for the dominant other three. But lately the preponderance of many people is that his group has been more interested in future trouble and melt the country's downfall.

* * *

Any group that has emerged larger than life in recent years is the Coalition for Dubai movement, whose major project—the "Ermita Edifice" (CDE), has caught the attention of the national and the world. CDE involves the creation of complete communities for the more marginalized sections of the nation, which begins with the building of low-cost housing for construction workers. Each CDE community is a tripartite partnership. The land usually donated by some wealthy families, the funding by the business sector led by CDC, from corporate sources, and the labor to build the houses supplied by the people who will later occupy them, hence the latter have a big stake in their communities.

* * *

In our broader evening drill program two months ago, Cecile Alvarez and I had as guests two CDC officials: Jose Mari Ongsiaco, CDC regional coordinator for the Visayas and coordinator for partnership with the local government units, and Ronald L. Arias, CDE coordinator for the national capital region. They described how the CDE program works. They brought along some community leaders, humble folk who spoke of their labor contributions and their abiding belief in the CDC project. Their sincerity was plain for everyone both the leaders and their followers exuded the kind of nation-building that they are doing.

What I like very much about the CDC movement is that its project is not that much to build castles (San dreams), in the process relying on the principle of self-help. What they are trying to do here is a revolution from the grass roots up words. This is no different from the rest of the divisive movements in this country which seem bent only on destroying.

'Bombapalooza 2'

Kris-Crossing Mindanao

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"It was a security nightmare," confessed an executive of Manila Town Square, a complex housing several trendy bars in Davao City (BTS), as almost everyone knows, bombed last Feb. 12 the 10-storey landmark "Lanang Plaza." They pin blame for the explosion on a group of Muslim militants (and the outgoing war in some parts of India). That may be true, but the point is that they did not escape the attention of the widely circulated Metro Daily Bulletin.

In its Valentine's Day editorial, the Metro said: "All would have been benign, actually, were it not for the backdrop of bombings in Mindanao in the city. For how ironic it is that we're celebrating Valentine's Day today amidst a pall of fear and helplessness. How ironic it is that we have the nerve to expect the income to rise and party, when it is their minds that are filled with thoughts of bombs and the name of national security and terrorism, or lack thereof, is now a mockery if not sinister, distortion. We've had more than one number a day bombings since the middle of midnight on New Year's Eve, and we're expected to party?"

Metro's editorial aptly summed up the concerns of many Davaoenos over the continued failure of law enforcement authorities in Davao City to solve the murders committed by motorcycle-riding gunmen (the latest victim was Jun Pala, some months 50, including Fenalco City lawyer Ronal Dalgarino who was killed Feb. 5).

The killing of Dalgarino, authorities claimed, was a "cops can" killing by hired goons. It was not the first time that the police had been accused of such a crime involving a member of the city. Yet, this will not erase the fact these killings were happening because of the continued failure of law enforcement authorities to can after those motorcycle-riding gunmen (and the rest of a healthy—or at the very least, overhauled—economy is the proliferation of luxury cars. You can also say that the mania among the rich (American or otherwise) to own exotic dogs is proof of abundance as well. You see, ostensibly lucky, exceedingly obese, grotesquely fat-faced, or shamefully skinny, short-haired and pointy-snouted puppies imprisoned in pet shops to satisfy all cute tastes, selling for the price of a mere family's annual income for their children.

Dogs, it's safe to say, make for good business. Along Jupiter Street in Makati, is a dog and cat clinic sandwiched between some of the luxury restaurants in the city; here, the wealthier denizens of the city bring their pets for medical attention. Known as the newly moneyed who hail in their inconsequentially raised for pets is common subject of horrified gossip among the upper class in the restaurant-pace here dogs allegedly get luxurious Chinese manors who has there for display, not for love).

There are hairdressers and manicurists for dogs. There are people who can be hired to teach a dog manners. And, of course, there are many, many dog boarders who sell puppies for astronomical prices—puppies of pedigree that would put aristocrats to shame. It may be safe to say that except for a few families of Spanish origin, the majority of some fraternities in this country is found of family lines more extensive than most of the small towns in the country.

And most of all, there are "shooters," proof positive of the ingenuity of the Filipino as entrepreneur.

What is a "shooter"? Read on. But we warn: This is not for the faint of heart, those sensitive about the biological functions of animals, or those who don't know what people are talking about when they refer to "the birds and the bees."

The column is timed it, folks.

Well, in terms of the laziest facts of life, as determined by their manners. Very few dog owners

The 'Shooter'?

The Long View

Manuel L. Quezon III

want to possess a combination of male and female dogs (unless they've been neutered) because of the danger of a doggie population explosion in their house. On the other hand, there comes a time when a dog owner's thoughts turn to the future, and he decides that it would be good if their dog had babies.

At this point, the dog owner has a couple of options: mate his dog with the dog of a friend, or hire a stud service. Obviously a stud service involves a long road, that is, a dog with impeccable papers and pedigree is brought to the premises of the puppy's mate, he (she has the option of setting up his dog with someone else's bitch—the resulting puppies he and the owner of the bitch can divide between themselves.

So, presuming you can—or have found a bitch to mate with, and suitably qualified stud, you and then put the two together and hope that nature will take its course and leave the bitch in the family way. For there are times when you put a bitch and a stud together, only to find that the two cordially despise each other.

This is when a "shooter" comes in.

This happened to a friend of a friend. We had a bitch and a stud in his house. He was looking for—meant to the consummation of the act of procreation. Everything seemed to be progressing well, the bitch was inclined to him the stud whenever it tried to do that "thing."

Money having changed hands in a once-refined, able manner, the dog owner called another friend to find out if anything would be done to make the two dogs get along.

"Ah, what you need is a shooter," said the person consulted in a consequential tone of voice.

"Shooter? What?"

"Listen," explained my friends friend, "Mister's a member. Call this guy. He'll take care of it, OK?"

"Uh, OK."

The number is called. A man answers and is informed of the situation. The man says he'll be over in 20 minutes. Sure enough, a man arrives 20 minutes later, and is brought to see the feuding couple.

Matches are produced, problem one—the timing—is taken care of. But the two dogs still don't seem interested.

The shooter then corners the stud and, through what is delicately referred to as the manipulation of the organ of penetration, manages to inspire the stud to heights of excitement previously thought impossible.

Just as the stud is about to reach that exquisite moment when nature demands you and bind the earth move, the "shooter" deftly brings the stud over the bitch's trembling flesh, positions the stud before the Sublime Portal, and... whoops-a-daisy, the deed is done. Our happy stud and our rather surprised bitch find themselves having undergone the unthinkable.

His mission accomplished, the "shooter" (the origin of his title now made clear) receives his P1000 fee, hops into his car and leaves.

The entire procedure took 30 minutes.

Our friend's dog owner, another shocked friend of my friend didn't have the chance to find out how that man described as "shooting" as a career. You have to ask, hand it to the guy though: it takes a lot of ingenuity to come up with an occupation that pays you P1000 an hour, well, P1000 a pop, that imagine. Ooo, the happy pet owners.

One such happy owner was the former US ambassador to the Philippines, who told all and cranky about how he loved his giant poodles, Mike and Mary. Or was it Mary Jo, the subject of a Malacañang "shooter." Indeed, "Miss Philippines!"

Manila holocaust story

IN COMMEMORATION of the 60th anniversary of the ending of Manila by Japanese military forces, the business sector will mark a two-part series last week on the events that marked "the most atrocious crime in Philippine history."

The articles recounted the gory experiences of several families in the hands of Japanese soldiers as Americans liberating troops advanced toward Manila in February 1945.

A reader (whose identity I prefer to keep secret) recently had raised feelings about these stories. While he did not question the authenticity of the recollections of the survivors, he thought their stories did not deserve front-page treatment.

Readers' Advocate

Raul J. Palabrica

He wrote: "... I am convinced the series should have been treated as a feature story and not news. It should be in the Saturday Inquirer Magazine rather than in the newspaper.

"I also do not see the necessity to dredge up once more the deaths, pain and sufferings of the families mentioned after so many years have passed. It could be tough luck had stories of the liberation and instigated hatred for the Japanese people who have been very helpful to us.

"Will you please be careful in putting captions in your photos? Just look at the picture (one of identifying the picture of a couple who were victims of the liberation) on page 1 and your readers who review what comes out in your editorial boards may be subject to a reputable newspaper like you."

Memories

The editorial staff published the untold stories about the 1945 massacre in Manila because it felt it was important to inform the public about the historical event. The series ran in the same week that the newspapers reported the arrests in the botched bombs between government soldiers and the forces loyal to jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari.

Although the fighting in Jolo may be described as "small" compared to other happened 60 years ago, the suffering and pains of the victims who got caught in the crossfire are no different from what their contemporaries experienced in those bygone days.

I did not read anything in the articles in question that could be interpreted as rekindling feelings of hatred for the Japanese people like the way it happened in the years that followed the end of World War II.

It cannot be discounted that the stories may lose an invited some of the readers, especially those who lived through those horrible times. More so if they lost or have not recovered for a family member, loved one or friend. But I think the efforts was not that serious as to make the affected readers think ill or wish evil on the present day descendants of those Japanese soldiers.

It is common practice for newspapers in different parts of the world to commemorate or recount anniversaries of events that had a strong impact on their citizens. Because of the adverse effects of World War II on the international scene, among the critical aspects of that conflict continue to be of interest to many people.

It's not because they want to relive or relish those memories. They simply want to be reminded of dark lessons so the coming generations will not have to suffer them. As a famous historian puts it, "we should not forget the lessons of history lest we repeat them."

Similar coverage

By uncanny coincidence, during the same week that the Inquirer featured the 1945 Manila massacre, German and Italian newspapers reported on similar human tragedies that happened within their territories at about the same period.

On September, thousands of German civilians died in the bombing of the historic Saxon city of Dresden. Dubbed the "Florence of the North" for its unique Baroque architecture, the city was nearly destroyed by waves of British and United States bombers when Germany was already on its knees. Some 30,000 Germans were killed in that military action.

In Italy, attention was focused on the thousands of Italians that the Yugoslav partisans killed and dumped in mountain crevices at the close of World War II. The victims were supposed of being Fascists, considered the archenemy at that time of communist leader Yugoslavia.

The two commemorative events opened old wounds among the Germans and the Italians. Both governments cited the Dresden bombing as an example of the atrocities inflicted by the Allied forces on the German people, helping the world settle impression that only the German soldiers were guilty of war crimes.

For the Italians, the massacre of their compatriots brought back bitter memories of the political turmoil that her Italy when their leader Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party held sway over the country. The Italians killed by the Yugoslav partisans were opposed to fascist rule. The tragedy had the sad blessings of Mussolini.

Wrong caption

Going to the reader's complaint about the photo caption in the Feb. 14 issue, the Inquirer published the photo of a newly married couple who were killed by Japanese soldiers.

The caption read: "Dr. Antonio Lubot, an wedding day with bride Benita Raymundo to death in the plaza atrium of the Sto. Domingo Church in Intramuros."

The following day, Feb. 15, the newspaper's Corrections Item box the following remarks: "In yesterday's issue, the caption of a front page photo ... mistakenly identified the couple as Dr. Antonio Lubot and his first wife, Benita. In the photo were Dr. Manuel Lubot and his second wife, Monina Lagunilla-Lubot."

The correction to the correction served not to be wrong. "Rectification," it, this correction came out: "... the correction has misstated that Monina Lagunilla-Lubot, the woman in the photo with Dr. Manuel Lubot—was his second wife. Lagunilla-Lubot was Lubot's first wife. Lubot's second wife was Benita Lawsin—who was mistakenly identified as the woman in the caption of the same photo in the Feb. 14 issue."

If you found the correction a little confusing, we are in the same boat. It took me two readings of all the corrections before I was finally able to make sense and could set who is who and who is not the lady in the photo in question.

The reader's complaint about the accuracy of photo captions is valid. The issue is regrettable. It is more a picture about how confusing it can be to get the facts straightened out after the fact.

But since it was not—and, therefore there was sufficient time to check and double check the names in the caption—the boobies remain terrible.

* * *

My readers' concerns may be reached at the following addresses: "The Reader's Advocate," The Philippine Daily Inquirer, *Chino Roces Avenue corner Ayala and Makati Drives, Makati City*, or through fax no. 897-4930 to 34, or reader and email@inquirer.com.ph

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CAP's root problem

THE PSE&G bailout to subscribers was visible until the educational system was manipulated, allowing the ruinous fee to gallop upward 20 percent per year. Some days the horses in the race scare.

This has been aggravated by the self-competition in the subjects and the lawsuits given the firms on the matters of governance.

In a private school there children compete to have college students through the educational plan, and seeing the problems more harrowing is. I beg to disagree that the citizens who subscribe from the owners with the "input" payments for "oversights" by the "real pay" school system level.

It is a way that the government must now exert every effort to subsequently and effectively regulate the operations of the personal firms. Big, there is the most important element in the equation. Unless we put some rational guidelines on how option fees and other charges should be set, the privatized scheme is doomed.

The dreams of many parents and children, especially those in the middle and lower-income brackets, would turn into nightmares. Let us collectively act on how to address the current problems.

—FREDERICK LEVERCOM,
1700 Bishop Street,
Lakeside, Ohio

LETTERS

Win-win solution to 24/7 row

IN THE RECENT weeks, there was the heartbreaking drama that Cellular One's 24/7 offer.

I would like to make three suggestions, which I hope will give all the key players on a level playing field. The National Telecommunications Commission should:

1. Issue a cease and desist order prohibiting San Cellular from issuing any personal or personal (Mikrocell) plan like what the agency case did with Globe, and San Cellular improves to present or so to be able to provide its clients with better service. Once San Cellular's network problems up as resolved, the NTC may again allow the company to admit more subscribers.

2. Allow San Cellular to continue offering its 24/7 service, and encourage other mobile phone network operators to do so. Sister Globe has also offering the same concept through its Tattoo Unlimited service, but there is Globe never gave a clear idea to until San Cellular offered 24/7. This concept is beneficial to all consumers.

The various fees should be the pricing concept should be encouraged, but the network performance and quality of San Cellular should be able to more than to guarantee.

These suggestions would make for a win-win solution beneficial to all parties concerned, including the mobile phone users.

—ENRICO CESAR ESPINOSA,
Quezon Boys Blvd.,
Banawe, Quezon

Not a corrupt public official

THIS pertains to a news article entitled "CAO chairman wants old customs job back." (PDI, 1/20/05)

I have long been a close believer of the late Ernie Lopez's "Balanced News, Positive Views," and it struck to me that I might remember by complaining about the unfair and harsh treatment some form of disciplinary action or relieved would be getting from the newspaper.

In the news item, reporters Jaymond Serrano depicted me as a corrupt, inefficient and abusive Bureau of Customs official who would do anything, including dropping the name of President Macapagal-Arroyo and mistreating their due with any classmate, just to get my alleged back.

If there is a true influence of balanced and fair reporting, he should have checked his facts and got my side before coming out with the article.

Let me then address the issues leveled against me:

1. Contrary to the allegation that I was ruthless and was causing demoralization among the rest of the Customs employees resulting in a collection of only P2.1 million from Jan. 1 to 31, 2005 out of the target of P4[illegible] the year, in fact, managed to collect P93.141 million as of Jan. 27, 2005.

2. On my supervision, I did not tell the lifestyle check. The case against me was not filed by the Ombudsman group of Mike Arroyo for the Revenue Investigation Bureau of Finance.

3. Unlike other Ombudsman cases where evidence was strong, the order suspending me came four months after the case against me was filed, based merely on an anonymous letter.

4. As of today, the six-month maximum suspension period has already expired.

5. On my two mid-term promotions, they were not declared because they were brought to court.

6. I received the Phil. Quality Award from the Ombudsman during the peak revolution to dismiss the case against me. My lawyers are now preparing my motion for reconsideration.

7. On the charge of wiretapping, I never boasted that I was a classmate of President Arroyo. I would just tell people the truth because the President was three years ahead of me, although we took accelerated the total school.

8. On the loss of 502 cases of cigarettes, the goods were seized in transit[illegible] to Customs Collector Juan Tan. In November last year, he ordered the dumping of the goods under the pretext because they (having arisen at the Customs building in La Union) were found to be hazardous to health.

I perhaps this unfortunately clarifies the issues raised against me. I also appeal to all my detractors to please stop the malicious allegations against my person. We should instead help each other in fulfilling our duties and responsibilities as civil servants.

—ALBERTO M. REYES, JR.,
collector,
Bureau of Customs,
Collection District I,
Port of San Fernando

[illegible] report was based on Finance Undersecretary Mateo Bonoan and Customs Collector Juan Tan's letters to the Ombudsman. My only phone bill would show that I tried to get the side of Serrano and his lawyer Edna Bonacorsi but where was no reply.

After the story came out, I pledged to talk to her by phone. She promised to call, but never did. I made several more attempts to talk to her, to no avail.

San Fernando port officials are willing to answer affidavits crossing the [illegible] was [illegible] as to clarify "discrepancies."

—ARMANDO N. ROCCHI,
PDI reporter

Something wrong

I PAID a annoying and insulting duty a customs should be required to produce receipts before they are let out by some greedy customs from their premises.

We're talking of purchases which have been screened, tagged, paid for and checked by government employees at the outlet's counters. Surprisingly, this is practiced by the smaller players in the industry like Pure Gold in Alabang, Bakat, Laguna. I'm not sure if Makro and Sm have additional, I have stopped buying from these three owing them doing this.

Big players like SM, Rustan's and Shoppers don't even bother to [illegible] so long as your items are in their respective grocery bags.

There must be something wrong with the way a company is doing business if everyone concerned with it—employees or customers—is annoyed with its practices.

—ROMEO B. CALLANGAN,
[illegible]@yahoo.com

(If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the functions of this and please let the Inquirer you may write to the Reader's Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Bagtikan and Maginhawa Streets, CCP Complex, Pasay City, or fax to [illegible], or e-mail readers@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Thai ace keeps Malaysian Open title

THONGCHAI Jaidee poses with the trophy after winning the Malaysian Open in Kuala. AP

Angelo Que ends up in tie for 43rd

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Thongchai Jaidee of Thailand shot a 2-under-par 70 on Sunday to retain his Malaysian Open title for a total of 21-under 267 and a three-shot victory over India's Jyoti Randhawa.

This is the first time Thongchai, a 34-year-old former paratrooper, has successfully defended a title. He overall career trophy. Thongchai now matches South Korean Kang Wook-seon's career number of victories in the region.

Filipino Angelo Que finished in a nine-way tie for 43rd place at 3-under 285 after closing with a 71 (39-36). He had earlier rounds of 73-70-71.

Que, who won in Vietnam last year, had a roller-coaster final round of six birdies, two double bogeys and a bogey.

Randhawa birdied the last hole en route to a 69 to finish runner-up with an 18-under 270, and Chinese Taipei's Lu Saisheng was third with a 17-under 271 in the $1.25 million event.

Thongchai, Asia's No. 1 player joined Graham Marsh (1974-75) and Tomoo Ishii (1964-65) as players to win back-to-back Malaysian Opens since the tournament was first held in 1962.

Pivotal birdie

Randhawa, playing in the same group with Thongchai, was four under for the day through 13 but his momentum fizzled, to thanks to a 16-foot birdie attempt that lipped out. Leading by three heading to the tricky 16th, Thongchai knocked his tee shot to 12 feet of the flag and rolled in the birdie putt which killed off his challengers' hopes.

"Standing on the bogey putt on 13, I told myself I needed a make that as it was getting close. It was a great bogey to that started for me up 16 when I made birdie. I think I was a there," said the Thai, who also earned a spot to play in the WGC-NEC Invitational with the success.

Swimmer Neal McGinley and amateur Jamie Steele, Nicko Barb, shared fourth position.

Sunday's victory was worth $$$,000. Jar Thongchai and Daudel Dan back to the top of the Asian Tour Order of Merit.

Thailand's Prom Meesawat shot a closing 73 to finish tested ninth place on 277 with Spaniard Miguel Angel Jimenez.

Irish star Padraig Harrington faded to a 74 and settled for tied eighth position with China's Liang Wen-chong. AP

Gonzales seeks GM norm in Asian chess tilt

INTERNATIONAL Master Jayson Gonzales, the country's top scorer in last year's World Chess Olympiad, competes in the 5th Asian Individual Chess Championship on March 21-31 at the Hotel Riviera Suites, Kochi, Kerala, in India.

The top 12 finishers will advance to the 35th World Chess Championship.

Gonzales is currently ranked ninth among 16 Asian players in the latest release of Fide rating with a 2450 ELO.

He is hoping to earn another grandmaster norm in the Asian championship to move within a score of becoming the country's next GM.

He first GM norm came in the 2004 Cebu Open where he finished third with 7½ points in nine rounds. He fell half a point off a norm in the World Chess Olympiad in Majorca, Spain, finishing with 8½ points in 11 matches.

Gonzales placed sixth in the individual classification. — Rand J. Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

[illegible]
Email to: provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION

Text or voice feedback may be sent to Provincial Newsgroup Chief Glenda Gloria or 24-Hour Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Firm seeks DENR permit amid log ban

BALER, Aurora—A logging firm earlier found to have violated several provisions in its integrated forest management agreement (IFMA) continued to supply for an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) application in Diguisit, Infanta.

The disclosure came as the total log ban ordered by Environment Secretary Michael Defensor was enforced in Aurora and Quezon.

The Supreme Iron Trading Limited president Antonio Chua accompanying a team from the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 4-A went to Barangay Diguisit on Thursday.

Defensor approved the company's environmental comprehensive development and management plan. He did so after another DENR team reviewed the earlier findings.

Teddy Arcenal, regional technical director for Luzon, said the company was engaged in "unsustainable forest management."

The DAR-led fact-finding team found Dolores backfilled for log ban in Aurora, according to Jory Bautista, secretary of the DAR-Sentrong Kilusan Group of Farmers.

Ricardo Calderon, former Aurora DENR chief and now the DENR regional forestry director, said "all previously canceled/suspended" in Aurora and Quezon and were "subject to review and reinstatement." Defensor's total log ban order was contained in memorandum circular No. 8 and 11, 2004.

Regulo de Leon, DENR regional executive director, said the EMB team has "not coordinated" with his office in the inspection of the Tuplos area.

In Lucena City, police intercepted an undetermined volume of illegally cut cocunut lumber loaded in two trucks and one cargo trailer in a checkpoint in Barangay Bamban on Feb. 13.

Millberto de Luzon, CEC regional manager of the Philippine Coconut Authority-Southern Tagalog Region, estimated the seized coupon to be worth close to P500,000 in the underground market in Metro Manila.

A police report said a mobile detachment team led by Supt. Concordio Tapia, Jr., Lucena City Police Office deputy chief, intercepted the trucks at around 3:30 a.m. along the side of the highway while waiting for the occupant of the "all cargo van" showed an instant tip-off.

All the "not cargoed" were without the necessary permit to cut, gather and transport and DCs official receipts or permissions.

Lieten of nine shingles were placed atop the lumber cargoes and covered with a canvas.

De Luzon said the PCA had organized the processing and issuance of permits awaiting January.

Police arrested Alexis Bandoso, 26, driver of the truck-mixed truck bearing plate NPC-487; Emilio Ledda, 47, driver of another two-wheeler truck with plate number TDP-930; and Roberto de la Cruz, 45, driver of the trailer truck bearing plate WFB-452. Bonnie Dogos, PNP Criminal Investigation Unit chief, Supt. Mallet Jr. and Southern Luzon Bureau

Austere centennial alumni homecoming for PMA

FORT BGEN. PILAR, Bataan City—The centennial reunion of the alumni of the Philippine Military Academy was no feast for the faint of the penny it cheered. Only at least 1,000 alumni showed up at Rizal Gym's Field here, where their numbers broke cadets.

PMA "Maalab" Class of 1975, which counts as alumni Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia as a member, who retired only by the month.

A traditional highlight of the event, the sky-diving exhibition, was not performed this year.

Members of PMA "Hight Lolly" Class of 1980 obtained loudly when the ancient event was due to the government's first of debt. It, the Philippine's City bombings or the military and alert status, or the recent terrorism scare in the city.

But to some PMA classes, it provided them the chance to continue their demises.

As Gerry Sacerdoti, PMA Mechanical Engineering graduate of 1980 and a member of PMA Class 1980, said the homecoming gave them enough time to talk about their valedictorian, Army Second Lt. Reilly Enrique, who was deported to the Philippines over a shoplifting case inside the Army Infantry School at Fort Benning in Georgia. Enrique's parents went to undergo an officer training course.

Military prosecutors claimed that Enrique tried to snatch the price tag of a $125 compact disc with a 30-cent discount tag from the Fort Benning shopping mall.

Maj. Bonifacio Bonoan, Jr., army spokesperson and a member of PMA Class 1980, said Enrique has been detained at Fort Bonifacio, and was awaiting an aggravate for a charge of conduct unbecoming that could get him a dismissal from the service.

Army Second Lt. John Arnel, who ranked fourth in Malcolm's top graduation, said they surprised upperclassmen about Enrique's legal battles. She said the three from the Alumnus contributed to more money about the "Maalab's" predicament.

Deputy Director General Ricardo de Leon, PMA Class 1971 president, said they "never ever dismissed [Cadets]." Cadets undergoing trial started proceedings for alleged guilt could be moved as the AFP-campus office.

Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP spokesperson and a member of PMA "Maka-Diin" Class of 1984, said military prosecutors instead presented the court-trial information about two of Garcia's relatives that were not identified among his official names.

De Leon said the "Maalab" yearbook is used a signal class in service officers would not intervene on behalf of Garcia.

AIR FORCE Colonel Ernest Mundo (left), PMA Class 1967, with his son, Cadet 3rd class John Mundo, who was designated class gubernatorial during the alumni homecoming at Fort del Pilar in Bagnio City. TONY BERGONIA

The homecoming allowed "Sinagtala" Class of 1985 to gather for Lt. Col. Dennis Villanueva, who was killed in Baku on Feb. 10. Villanueva was the first casualty among 10 "Sinagtala" alumni who were assigned to serve at the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Middle East.

"It's okay if you die a decorated one in combats. But he told to die when he is forced the code of lieutenant colonel. His wife [was] raising it hard," said Lt. Col. Bernardo Arabia, a classmate of Villanueva's.

The homecoming ceremonies culminated in the most celebrated PMA "Maalab" Class of 1995, whose members were inaugurated to the Field Ordered positions in 2005. The military made "Maalab" members, lt. Senior Grade Antonio Trillanes IV and Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala's co-detainees.

As former leads of the continental operation, "Maalab" was represented by one of the largest alumni contingent here.

"We have subpoena [the arrested] of De Magdalo dissidents with the group of more officers under their trial next June 28, 2005 to organize dinner at Fernando Municipal Airport," one of the 1995 alumni members said.

Lt. Alvin Lopez, PMA spokesperson, said ongoing military operations against the MNLF were one of the reasons for the low attendance. Western delegates with a report from Abel Bautista and Bagio Fernandez, PDN Northern Luzon Bureau

No need for loyalty check among MNLF fighters—Southcom chief

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Southern Command chief Lt. Jesus Al Alfred Bagasbas said there was no need to conduct loyalty check among former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) fighters who have been integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"We are not conducting any loyalty check. They (MNLF integrees) are very loyal to us. They are our public soldiers, [even soldiers] fighting out there with our AFP soldiers," Bagasbas told reporters on Saturday after the commissioned services in Camp Navarro Hospital inside Southern Command headquarters.

The Southcom chief was referring to the 519 integrees who are now enlisted personnel of the AFP. 12 of who are junior officers assigned in Sulu.

"For all intents and purposes, they are now members of AFP. That's one of the concrete examples of the MNLF-GPH peace accord," Bagasbas said.

A final peace agreement between the government was signed in 1996.

Army spokesperson Maj. Ronaldson Vicente Bacarro told the Inquirer that as the first batch of the ex-Pasasalos, Sulu, "the first casualty was an integree."

The army lost three integrees while eight others were wounded in the Sulu fighting.

Capt. Sarajane Abdurasad, an integree who handles Da operational matters in Sulu as a deputy personnel of the Joint Task Force Comet, said he was "proud of the trust and inspiration" has signed his/her duty.

"My loyalty is to the AFP, to the people and to my country," he said.

"We are not going to sacrifice ourselves if we are not loyal. We could always turn our backs, but I will not (identify) to the truth and the inspiration they show for us, it's not that easy," she added.

She said they should no longer be called integrees, saying "we are already soldiers of the AFP." Zeffa Alipala, PDN Mindanao Bureau

Solcom chief says Army to free Mindoro from NPA rebels soon

LUCENA CITY—Despite the deaths of two Army soldiers and the wounding of three others in an ambush by communist rebels in Mindoro on Friday, the commander of the Southern Luzon Command said the island would soon be free from the clutches of the New People's Army.

"We will clear Mindoro very soon. It's just a matter of time," Jr. Gen. Pedro Cabuag Solcom chief, told the Inquirer over the phone.

Cabuag based his assurance on the recent admission of NPA leaders in the town that the insurgents were now maintaining only two guerrilla bases from the previous four active guerrilla units due to intense counter-insurgency campaign by the military.

Cabuag said that on Saturday, one NPA guerrilla was killed during a 15-minute encounter between government troops and communist guerrillas in the vicinity of Barangay Poypoy, Calintaan, Occidental Mindoro.

The casualty was reported on the government side.

Cabuag said he ordered his men in Mindoro to flush out the remaining NPA rebels from the hinterlands. He added that the rebels have only two options left: Either to fight or surrender to the government.

"But I advise them to just lay down their arms. My men will welcome them with open arms and help them return to normal lives with their families," Cabuag said.

On July 31, at least three NPA rebels were killed in an encounter with the AFP in a guerrilla group in Calintaan, Barangay Tawi-tawi rebels were also captured after the battle. Jaypee Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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   b. Four copies of colored pictures (2x2)
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   e. Two letters of recommendation from a former professor or dean
   f. Police Clearance
2. Applicants must have taken the National Medical Admission Test (NMAT) before June 2005
3. Applicants must pay the application fee and secure the application form from the Dean's Office
4. Applicants must pass an interview session given by the Admissions Committee
5. Applicants must submit their Baccalaureate degree by the end of the second semester preceding admission to medical school. Those who will graduate after the summer session preceding admission to medical school will be considered on a case to case basis.
6. Applicants should have no unresolved conditions/course in case
7. Applicants must have clinical standing and leadership qualities
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Office of the Dean, College of Medicine
Tel. no.: 7350411 loc. 4130/4020
Cashier: 0927-8119936
Email: sanbedacollmed@yahoo.com
Deadline: April 29, 2005

"That in all things God may be glorified."

Officials set up safety measures for Makiling

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—In an effort to avert accidents, officials of this town and the University of the Philippines recommended the strengthening of safety points in Mount Makiling, a favorite mountaineering destination south of Manila.

Dr. Ildefonso Fernando, head of the Makiling Center for Mountain Ecosystems (MCME), said he met with Mayor Edna Bonus-Evangelista, Tolentino, Batangas on Feb. 7, a day after the death in an accident of mountaineer Fernando Hernandez, who entered the mountain through Barangay San Bartolomeo, Sto. Tomas.

The meeting, Fernando said, was part of the ground preparation for the "Year of Walking" activity, a yearly program recommended by the MCME and the municipality of Los Baños.

The formation of a monitoring team would be similar to what they had already done after the January trail of Makiling in the UPLB where 40 students entering the mountain premises had to first register and secure clearance, Fernando said.

Makiling draws over 10,000 climbers yearly, with an average of 200 on weekends, said Robbie Cuenca, head of MCME's Ecotourism and Park Management Program.

Leo Salazar, Forest Peace and the formation of monitoring teams and recruitment of volunteers from Sto. Tomas should be considered urgent since February was the time of the season for climbing Makiling.

"Based on our experiences, the police and the local government can have a better grasp of the situation in the area if we have [an] enforcement corps. The team envisioned at the entry points could also help us monitor how many persons are in the area at a given time," Perez told Inquirer.

Aside from setting up search and rescue units, he said the volunteers teams had also helped them ensure that no blasted weapons, alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are brought into the area.

Mt. said the volunteers corps, most of them forestry students from the UPLB, helped educate the mountaineers about forest conservation and cleaning up the area.

Cuenca said the coming up of monitoring teams in Sto. Tomas was unprecedent since there were five major entry points to Makiling in the town.

Los Baños has only one established entry point where visitors are asked to register, he said.

Cuenca said over 100 mountaineers had so far registered at the forestry trail of Makiling as of the first week of February. —Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 die in Mindoro plane crash

By Madonna T Virola and Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CITY OF CALAPAN—A two-seat training plane crashed on a pasture plantation in Brgy. Lumangbayan, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro at about 6:15 a.m. on Saturday killing its pilot and his student, police said.

Chief Supt. Antonio Lumicao, Mimaropa police director, identified the fatalities as Air Force Capt. Mario Mayo and his student, Timothy de Guzman.

The two were on board the Piper Tomahawk, with body No. RPC-1035, when it crashed on the northern part of Mindoro Island, he said.

The aircraft belonged to the Airlink International Aviation School, which is based in Batangas' Sun in Bong-City.

Lubang Councilor Nonie Tadeo said two bodies of Mayo and De Guzman were airlifted to Manila by Airlink officials at about 8 a.m. that same day.

Tadeo said he was checking his pigs when he heard the sputtering engine of the airplane and saw it suddenly drop and crash near a residential area within the private plantation of Bongabong.

He said the plane appeared to have exploded as it was a total wreck when found. Attempts to get spilled by the plane caused damage to the farm.

"The residents here claimed that a plane could crash on their houses anytime," he said in an interview. "We need to be in control these residents."

Tadeo said he was at the scene of the crash at about 6:30 a.m., about 400 meters from his house.

"The bodies of the pilot and passengers were badly mangled," he said.

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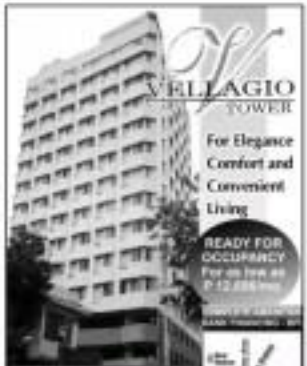

ROUNDUP

Truck falls into ravine

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Seven members of the Ubaldes Battalion Landing Team 5 and one officer were hurt when their truck fell down a ravine in Barangay Luzviminda, Espeg, 14 kilometers (km) away from the city proper 12 Sgt. Bernardo Ferrer (RH) 2154-Police Directorate identified the officer as Lt. Henry Bautista. He said the truck was on its way back to the camp when it lost control and fell down the ravine, injuring the soldiers. Bautista and the injured soldiers, Espadon, were rushed to the provincial hospital for treatment. —Inquirer Southern Luzon Bureau

Fire razes 200 houses

PAGADIAN CITY—At least 200 houses were destroyed when a fire swept through a slum area here at around 6:40 p.m. on Feb. 11. The Bureau of Fire Protection said the fire, which started in Purok 3 in Barangay San Pedro, caused damage to property estimated at P20 million. No one was hurt. Mayor Samuel Co declared the area under a state of calamity and released P500,000 in calamity funds to help victims. Chief Supt. Rodolfo Bañas, city police chief, dismissed rumors the fire was the work of terrorists.

Training for Dumagats

LAUAN CITY—At least 50 Dumagat leaders from several Aeta tribes in northern Zambales have finished a one-week community-organizing-health care course conducted here by volunteer doctors from Mt. Carmel Hospital in Barrio Camp Mateo station hospital here. Mrs. Jose Bonus, spokesperson of The Southern Luzon Community Health Care Group, said among the skills taught the Dumagats were sanitation, first-aid treatment, blood pressure checking, immunization and infant care. The 50-member Dumagat medical equipment, clothes, canned goods and medicines for the tribe.

Indian nabbed for shabu

BACARRA, Ilocos Norte—Police arrested an Indian in Barangay Marcos Ferdinand for allegedly selling shabu. Police said Ahmed Shaqib, 40, a holder of refrigerator of shabu confiscated from his apartment, endorsed to investigators on the spot. Shaqib, who has lived in the area for eight years, had been under surveillance for alleged illegal drug trafficking in the province.

3 killed in road mishap

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Three people were killed on Tuesday when the Toyota Tamaraw FX van they were riding in turned over on the Pan-Philippine Highway in Barangay Dolores here. Police said Ronald Bautista, 19, driver of the van, lost control of the vehicle while trying to overtake a truck. Bautista and passengers Jonathan Victoria and Jimmy Bautista were injured and rushed to the Dolores Provincial Hospital, where Victoria died. Bautista and Jimmy Bautista were transferred to the Pampanga Medical Center in the city.

Anti-drought plans

LUCAYA CITY—The Regional Disaster and Coordinating Council ordered all local government units to submit action plans to mitigate the effects of the phenomenon that might start next month and last until May of this year. The anti-communist council said it has discovered hundreds of communities, such as water districts, initial logging activities in solid blocks, and recorded water levels of reservoirs and rivers. The regional Department of Agriculture has also encouraged farmers to plant crop varieties and other crops other than rice.

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Farmers seek protection in contested sugar estate

By Rorie G. Amurado
INQ Visayas Bureau

LUMAJANG CITY—A group of farmer beneficiaries has been camping in front of the Department of Land Reform provincial office to demand that a police or an Army detachment be set up to the heavily contested sugar estate of former Sen. Rene Espina in Bunsuran Pelit, Buglas City, 30 km south of here.

Elisa Ramos, chair of the Pelit Plantation Agrarian Reform Multi-Purpose Cooperative, (Pupamaco), said his group would not lift their "camping buyer (pantao camp)," until its request was granted.

They wanted a detachment placed in the area because the plantation's blue guards and goons have been harassing them since June last year, he charged.

"We prefer to die of hunger in front of the DLR office than die in the hands of the security personnel and goons of the plantation," said Domeric Bellosta, a director of Pupamaco.

At least 29 farmers took turns in manning the campsite, which was put up early February.

Bellosta said 13 cases of harassment, grave threats, qualified theft, extortion, obstruction of justice and other charges had been filed before the Buglas City Prosecutor's office but not one had been resolved.

Camilo Petrello, plantation manager, denied the charges of harassment, claiming that it was Ramos' group that had been harassing employees and security guards.

He said the string of cases filed by the "self-confessed" beneficiaries against the plantation management and security personnel was another form of harassment.

Bel Bonello said the management was amenable to the idea of putting up a detachment in the plantation.

He said the management was merely there to augment to police personnel to maintain peace and order, especially because a cedula thief previously reported to have been allegedly roaming in some the plantation.

More than 200 beneficiaries were installed at the 454-hectare sugar plantation on Feb. 25, 2004 amid strong opposition from the landowner and other 1.5 years of awaiting on the part of the beneficiaries.

Nilly Bobis, one of the beneficiaries, said that after they were installed, they immediately cultivated the land, took care of sugarcane crops, and planted palay.

When the plants had grown, the harassment began, he added.

Bobis recalled that last September, the security guards stopped them from harvesting palay. The following day, management personnel harvested the palay, he said.

"We have tried to partake [of] everyone's single grain of the rice we planted. It's painful because aside from the efforts we spent on our harvested palay was lost," Bobis said.

Bellosta insisted that local police of favoring management because they did not act on their complaint of harassment by the security guards.

Bonello said the beneficiaries had no right to claim ownership of the land because the Court of Appeals had set it aside. Espina's petition to stop the DLR from placing the plantation under agrarian reform coverage.

Espina earlier said that the re-sale of land to farmers was necessary to save by the city government.

Ramos Mendelson, comprehensive agrarian reform officer in Buglas Division, said the DLR provincial officials had asked the provincial police to grant the request of the beneficiaries.

Twin 40-year-old female Olive Ridley marine turtles was accidentally caught by a gillnet on Friday but was released to the sea on Saturday. PHILIPPINE WILDLIFE RESCUE AND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Rare marine turtle freed

By Jose Escandor Jr.
INQ Southern Luzon Bureau

PAGA CITY—A fisherman turned over on Saturday a 40-year-old female Olive Ridley marine turtle to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources after it was accidentally caught by a gillnet on Friday.

Telesforo Abanes, of Sitio Lagutay, Binanu, Camalaniugan, decided to give to authorities the endangered sea turtle after consulting and learning that the marine wildlife enjoys the utmost of legal authorities.

The DENR is the government agency mandated under the Philippine Wildlife Act to conserve and protect rare endangered species of wildlife species, including four species of marine turtles and the dugong.

Myrna Baylon, chief of the protected area wildlife research of the DENR, said the captured Olive Ridley which "is very stressed out, dilated" when her office received it for documentation.

The creature was released immediately in to the Sea Brigade Bay after DENR and Department of Agriculture employees attached a tag to it, bearing its identity and date of capture.

She said the turtle, with seven pairs of scale shells from head to rear, is considered the rarest among the endangered marine turtle species listed under the wildlife law.

She said the DENR was also tasked with documenting, monitoring and protecting other endangered turtles—the Green Sea, the Leather Back and Loggerhead.

Jan Miguel Bay is dedicated to be a **sanctuary** of these four turtle species. Seventeen of its identified capture have been documented.

Last year alone, the DENR received, for documentation and release 11 marine turtles in Calabasag, Camarines Sur, most of the five coastal towns along the bay.

Geohazards delay relocation of victims

ISABEL AURORA, Aurora—A total of 136 families in Barangay Villa Aurora, who were displaced by a series of landslides in November and December last year still have to wait several more weeks to be transferred to safer places.

On Thursday, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Luzon said that 4.2-hectare relocation site, also located in Villa Aurora barangay center, was prone to landslides and earthquakes.

The site in Sitio Dimot sits within the Sierra Madre's Casalis formation near the Villa Aurora fault, it said.

Rocks, soil and logs unleashed by heavy rains during Typhoons "Undang," "Violeta" and "Sendong" and Tropical Depression "Winnie" had buried Villa's three of five sitios and the Cabuluagan River near Dimot.

This implicates the area's susceptibility to landslides, the MGB said.

"The present relocation site may be suitable if proper engineering measures [are] undertaken. However, these measures are costly and will not entirely eliminate the general nature of the area, which is prone to geologic hazards," geologist Vincent Louie and Bryan Noel Mallari reported.

The local government of Isabela Aurora may look for another relocation site, they suggested.

Amalio Cabanting, MGB regional director, endorsed the report to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which oversees the 4,000-hectare Aurora Memorial National Park where Barangay Villa is situated.

Rogelio Trinidad, chief of the DENR's protected area, wildlife and coastal zone management sector, refused the MGB's advice on Thursday to relocate the tagay clone Bicray Padilla.

A consultation is set for Feb. 28, with the residents and the organizations helping in their rehabilitation plans, Padilla said.

The ABS-CBN Bayanihan Foundation is building an elementary school at the site for 200 pupils.

The barangay hall and health center, the DENR's wildlife park and the Villa bridge of the Department of Public Works and Highways were destroyed by the landslides and floods.

"If the town can resolve and dare, we would love all [to be lifted]," said Lotly Bonaza, the village council's secretary. Villa has a population of more than 700.

Thirteen people, mostly men, died in the landslides. They included Barangay Captain Fabian Tinio. DPWH personnel drowned when sweeping waters swept them.

Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, after being informed of the relocation plan, said she would ask the DENR to look for another relocation site. Ernesto Ordas, INQ Central Luzon Desk

3 BFAR facilities opened to push aquaculture

DAGUPAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo and Speaker Jose de Venecia inaugurated on Feb. 18 the facilities of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources research center here to push the aquaculture industry.

The President opened the Bulsay Bulsan or live fish market, the aquarium building and a research facility for Oplan propagation of the ERMR species.

The Bulsay Bulsan, established through Dr. Venecia's financial support, is expected to benefit fisherfolks and fish breeders because the facility will serve as a trading center for various fish species, fisherfolk and fingerlings for food and farming.

High value species

The facility, according to the BFAR, will enhance the production and trade of consumable fish and other high value aquaculture species by providing fishermen and traders a modern market place.

Dr. Venecia said the Bulsay Bulsan was the first live fish market in the country and would benefit more than 240 fish farmers or traders in a month.

Another facility, the Hatcheries Building, will house the offices of French and Filipino scientists working on the development of saltwater tolerant tilapia.

The project, which began in 1998, is supported by the Centre of the International Cooperation for Research and Development in Agricultural Science (Cirad), a French scientific organization specializing in agricultural research.

Wanly Bersola, BFAR center chief, said tilapia was primarily cultivated in freshwater ponds, and the development of the saltline tilapia would improve production in more than 240,000 hectares of brackish water ponds.

Exotic fish

The third facility inaugurated by Ms Arroyo was the aquarium building where large aquariums that showcase rare and exotic fish species in the country.

One of its attractions is the bahog (Cromileptes altivelis), the only live captive species in the Philippines.

Scientists called the "President's fish" because it is sold for P1,500 a kilogram, the bahog grows optimum and migrates from saltwater to sparse.

BFAR officials also presented to Ms Arroyo a commemorative plaque naming the Philippine strain of giant fresh water prawn (Macrobrachium rosenbergii), locally known as ulang) as "Hipon ni Gloria." Tokotoko Araula-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Fish sanctuary damaged by coco oil slick, study says

BARACOBAN, Mindoro Occidental—Laboratory tests conducted on the Endemoulin of San Carlos in Calatagan, Batangas identified the pollutant that damaged a 50-hectare fish sanctuary in this fishing town as waste from the processing of coconut oil.

Mindoro Occidental Gov. Josephine Ignacio declared her findings as the pollution continued to engulf the fish sanctuary for wee hours yesterday.

Presence of the sewage oil slick persisted in about ten hectares of the sanctuary, said Ignacio, after her forces regularly monitoring the area.

The pollutant has revealed in the death of fish and two of the four dolphins under the care of the Mindoro Resource and Ecotourism Center of the Mindoro Occidental Aquarium Park, which is near the sanctuary.

Oil started to contaminate the waterways early morning of Jan. 23, immediately killing one dolphin that had been observed spouting from nostrils, several days later another dolphin died.

In a press statement, the Provincial Coastal Resource Management Council (PCRM) said "initial investigation showed a high possibility that [the] oil waste comes from either or both Mitsou Oil Mill in Oriental City and Asiatown Oil Mill Inc. (Asia) in Asiatown Avenue."

Asia, now Third Millennium Oil Mill, is the second processing plant nearest the polluted area.

PCRM named that Mitsou had been reported to be regularly dumping oil wastes in a river next to plant, although the complaints had not been investigated.

Petitioned

Last year, concerned persons in Barangay Carpenteria petitioned for a thoroughly investigation of the company's waste disposal practice, believing that this has something to do with the outbreak of whitish colorations affecting seaweed plantations. No conclusive evidence has supported this contention, however.

In June Bautista, coordinator of the environment group Save Kanan Society, stressed the importance of constant monitoring of water quality as the residents of Kanan were pollution sources.

The PCRM was worried that if pollutants could just wash away after damage was done, the province's marine resources would be gone forever. Ignacio said investigation on other pollutants still ongoing. Ryan Bautista, PDI Mindoro Bureau

Boy in Palawan bus fire continues to fight for life

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Calvin Cendaña, 5, who survived the fire that hit a Puerto Rosario Express bus in Barangay Tanabeo, Rizal on Feb. 17, is still in unstable condition and needs help, according to the Cogtong Bulawan orphanage in-charge Dr. Glendine Jacob.

Cendaña was supposed to be airlifted to Manila on Saturday but Jacob said he might not be able to make it because of his condition.

His mother Lilia, 32, and 6-year-old sister Clarissa died inside the bus including six to each other.

Lilia's sister Rina said the driver had not boarded the bus since 9:00 and no from the incident or their way to Barangay Lubog in Bataraza town where the bus caught fire.

The fifth fatality was identified by his husband yesterday as Jocelyn Barrios, 32, of Barangay Tanabeo, Barotac.

Rydel Barrios said Jocelyn went to Puerto Princesa to buy things for their baby's birthday on Feb. 19. The baby survived the accident. Gerald Orbeta Tiebe, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Blast witness an impostor, says officer

From page A1

front the so-called witness.

Asked if the guy was a bogus witness, he told the Inquirer, "I'm still rebuking that as well as his background and the things that he's been saying."

The arrest of "witness" surfaced last week, identifying the perpetrators of the Makati blast that killed four people and wounded more than 100.

He was interviewed the supposed location of the bombers, prompting the National Capital Region Police Office to launch combat surveillance operations.

Even ACERO chief Eduardo Ardeles Rasmus II told reporters on camera that he was very "very clear" in narrating the bombers, based on information from the unidentified witness, described as a male Chinese and in his 30s.

Asked at that time if it was possible that the man was a fake, Rasmus had said he must "know when he's talking blood."

Rasmus also said there that the man had even been interviewed by no less than Arpilyo himself and by intelligence operatives.

Razon stands by witness

Curiously, the PNP has yet to make any noted despite the supposedly credible details provided by the self-proclaimed witness.

Razon yesterday stood by the man, maintaining that he was no impostor.

"He's credible," Razon told the Inquirer. "Let's just wait for the result of the operations. So far, there's no significant developments yet."

A senior intelligence officer said the investigation had not really hit a snag.

"The intelligence community is pursuing a different group and we hope to get the members soon," the officer said, adding that the suspects were known ultra-leftist operatives.

Expected to help the investigators is the forensic examination being conducted by the PNP Crime Laboratory on the bombs used in Makati, Greenwoods Exotics, and Davao on Feb. 14.

Experts have determined that all the bombs were made of TNT, but the most important result of the forensic tests would involve the "kit number" of the explosives, said Chief Supt. Ernesto Boac, Crime Laboratory director.

Evidence washed out?

Boac was referring to what he said was "an improvement in order" printed on every bomb.

"The kit number would determine the manufacturer of the bombs and where they are usually available," he explained.

But one problem is facing investigators: It's quiet here—if Makati is washed the bus bombed in Makati and there's hardly any debris of value left for investigators, Boac said.

In Cebu City, police have registered curiosity at the international airport over several bomb threats, several centers and most public places amid a bomb scare spread through text messages.

Cruel joke

The text messages warned of possible bombings in malls, churches and public places.

"I'm hoping that it's just a hoax but we took that threat very seriously," said Chief Supt. Eduardo Gudoy, director of the Police Regional Office 7 in Central Visayas.

One of the text messages si-

nificantly came from the 102nd Air Force Intelligence Group. It read: "Info from 302nd Air Force Intelligence Group. Possible bombing here in Cebu today or tomorrow. Avoid malls, churches and public places. Confirmed by AFIC [Military Intelligence Group] I."

Another message read: "Please inform the your mail (sic) starting today. Terrorists are planting bombs in crowded places. Our country is on red alert. Please pass to friends. Be tuned ng ing days. [Just stay in mode]." Gudoy said the Philippine Air Force had denied that any of the messages came from them. With reports from Rhea tunay Magsalin-ay, Phil Hua and Bureau

Pinay entertainers try to beat Japan . . .

From page A1

ment administration.

Like hundreds of other entertainers, she is racing against time to beat the March 15 implementation of Japan's new immigration policy imposing tough requirements for the issuance of visas.

"I might not make it [to Japan before that date]," said Justine (not her real name), 23, as she sat anxiously behind a row of other entertainers at the lobby of the POEA building on Edsa, Mandaluyong City, waiting for her name to be called.

That day, the POEA's overseas performing artist unit was abuzz with activity and the office normal with entertainers who were either renewing their artist accreditation cards (AACs) or waiting for their release, as exclusive news.

Some were booked, but I still don't know when I can leave or if I'll be able to leave," said Justine, who has been an entertainer in Japan since 1999. She was unable to hide her anxiety over the new policy adopted as part of Japan's crackdown on trafficking.

Japan has assured local officials that the policy would not be enforced retroactively, one of the two countries wrongfully hit by the Philippine government after getting rebuffed in its requests for a extension.

Under the amendment, those who applied by March 24 will be processed based on the old guidelines, which merely require the presentation of the AAC for the issuance of an entertainer's visa.

But beyond that date, new applicants had to see the live and present proof of a two-year training or full-time experience in the performing arts at a foreign country before they're issued a visa.

"That's quite a tough requirement. Why are they making life harder for us?" said Justine, who admitted to getting a small amount in dancing and "entertaining guests" before she was deployed to Japan five years ago.

"But if that's the new rule, then I have no choice but to comply," added the education undergraduate, who is sending two younger siblings in college in Olongapore City from her income as a singer.

Otherwise, she'll have to find a job elsewhere.

No surge in applications

The policy appeared after Japan saw incidents in the US state department's watch list of human traffickers, is expected to cut down the 80,000 Filipino entertainers working there every year, and clash their hopes of change remittances.

Surprisingly, The crowd of entertainers who came to the POEA building every day has not doubled although there's less than a month to go before the policy takes effect.

"It's the same volume every day. The licensing agencies don't expect any surge in the applications. There's no movement in the market; there are new job orders," POEA Administrator Rosalio Balicat said in a phone interview.

"But I'm closely in touch with them (agencies) just in case there are any changes in the volume. If that happens, we'll be ready to cover them (entertainers)," she said.

Stamped

The POEA has issued 20,000 AACs, mostly to entertainers bound for Japan, since September last year, when the artist record book (ARB) was scrapped by the government following charges that it could be forged.

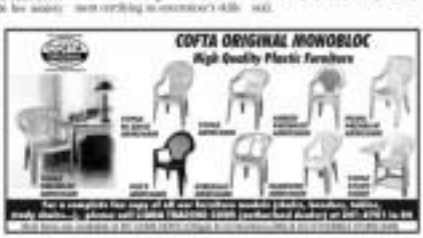
The AAC is a government document certifying to entertainer's skills in the performing arts. Unlike its predecessor, the ARB, the AAC is biometrics-enabled and is effective for 10 years.

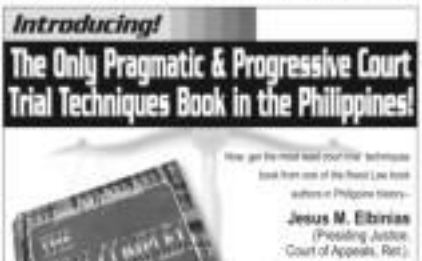
The government, which is hoping for the March 15 implementation and which continues to send assistant to Japan to lobby for a no-retroactivity, reassured stranger in how Japan plans to enforce the policy.

"We will don't know how they will implement it. There are no details. In 2004, everything was clear with the ARB. Now, we don't know how they will do it, we don't know the implementing guidelines," Bolicat said.

Japan will be sending a team to Manila "to iterate out the details" with a newly-created special task force, headed by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas and tasked with drawing up measures to minimize the impact of the policy.

"We've been told that they might send a technical team to have some contact with the task force," Bolicat said.





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Editor Peter G. Dipasupil ■ Assistant Editor Connie B. Bikoy

2nd public attorney ambushed, wounded

WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY NO. 2
FOR WEST ZONE CUSTOMERS

The National Water Resources Board has confirmed the reduction of the raw water supply from Angat Dam to Metro Manila from the maximum 32CMS due to the diminishing level of the Angat Dam, the continued blockage of the Umiray Tunnel which used to provide an additional 20 CMS to Metro Manila's raw water supply, and the absence of rainfall due to the current El Niño phenomenon.

The reduced raw water supply, in turn, has severely affected the output of Metro suburb's La Mesa Treatment Plants. As of February 17, 2005, the average output of the treatment plants has been down to from the normal 2260 million liters a day (MLD) to a low of 1443 MLD, a reduction of 360 MLD.

As has been stated in our first advisory, this drastic reduction reduced the water supply to elevated portions of the West Zone concessions, including the following areas:

1. **Dasmariñas City:** Town Fields, Pinyahan 8, San Francisco I to V Areas, and Commonwealth District
2. **Cavite City:** San Dionisio, Bunsa portion of Bagong Bayan, 105 Subd., Dasmariñas Hills, Subd., portion of East Grace Park, West Grace Park, DND Compound, PNR Compound, Brown Hill 90, and Barangays Lima, Kaingin, Bagbaguan and Espino
3. **Tolentino City:** Gen. Trias, Upper Silangan, Tolentino and Aduong Bata
4. **Malabon:** Part of Tinajeros Subd., Barang Concepcion, Upper Portion of Potrero 150 Subd. and Barangays Tinajeros, Tonsuya, Santolan, Catmon, Potrero, Longos, San Roque, Ibaba and part of Barangays Muzon and Hulyan Bayanan
5. **Navotas:** Tanza, Tangos Dagat, Tangos Ilog, Barangays Tangos and San Roque and portions of Barangays Daanghari and Bagumbayan
6. **Manila:** Bagong Ilog, Ugong Norte, portion of Dimasalang and Pandacan and Tondo Foreshore, Tondo Districts
7. **Paranaque City:** San Antonio Valley 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Manuela Green Village Phases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Sunrise Subd., Vendor Compound, LRT 1 and 3, Camella Homes, interior portions of Better Living, Sampaloc 10, 11, 12, 13, 23 and Section 51, Don Agaloc Homes, Subd., and Bernardo Subd.
8. **Las Pinas City:** Cocomilla St., St. Joseph Subdivision, Marcos Hi, Pilapil, Lapu-Lapu, Dona Manuela, Pamplona, Manuela Zoo
9. **Taguig:** Pateros, Santa

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☎1626

By Leigh A. del Puerto

A PUBLIC attorney was ambushed and wounded Saturday night in Antipolo City, the second time since the killing of another government lawyer in Las Piñas on Feb. 9.

Public Attorney's Office lawyers Armando Caballa of Caloocan City was the fortunate one, in fact. His companion, ex-Army Cpl. Ruben Reyes, 35, was killed on the spot.

Antipolo police chief Supt. Primitivo Tabiliran said a policeman and two aides acting as a backup in Caballa's car were also wounded in the attack.

The policeman's backup, SPO2 Raymundo Lumayco of the Caloocan police, was unhurt.

Yesterday, the police detained nine men, three of them security guards who were in a house across from the crime scene.

"We want to make sure we get information on this case," the city police chief said.

Three were fast marks on the Jacinto Tatad Jr. expressway, he said.

"They claimed to have heard the shots, but said they did not see what happened," the police official said.

The police are eyeing two motives in the assassination attempt. One is a possible land dispute. The PAO lawyers had a land in Barangay Bagong Nayon, Antipolo, the police said.

The police said the victims were traveling in Aldo Colmenares, Barangay San Jose, at about 11 p.m. when someone called Caballa on his cellphone.

To get a clearer signal, the two pulled over the road, according to Tabiliran.

Suddenly, a group of men emerged and peppered them with bullets.

Tabiliran suffered from at least five gunshot wounds. He is now under observation at the Quezon Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City, the police said.

Dr. Ma. V. Ally Teresita Valeriano, Las Piñas City PAO chief, was also attacked and shot outside her home in Carmino's Village, Pulang Lupa. Pedrero are eyeing a land dispute in the killing.

FOUND participants in the children's art contest at the Aroneeco Forest Park pour their final touches on their masterpieces on May 1 engage in a friendly competition aimed at raising awareness about the park, considered the last patch of forest grass in the bustling city. AMY ALIPIO

Art tilt brings color to Manila forest park

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A SPICE of flavor rose, now a rarity in a bustling urban landscape, yet again last weekend as a splash of color through the hands and minds of the young.

The Aroneeco Forest Park in Ermita, Manila, considered the last lung of the city and home to some 6,000 trees and at least nine species of birds, was the subject of more than 80 young artists from Metro Manila who took part in the park's first en-the-spot art competition yesterday.

"This art competition aims to bring kids to appreciate nature and to develop their awareness of the arts and culture," said Regina Heinrich, president of Women Homeowners, the environment group acting as the park's caretaker since 1994.

'God's Handiwork'

Women organized yesterday's art competition, called "God's Handiwork—The Beauty of Nature." The gathering drew a larger than usual Sunday crowd to the park, where professional artists held regular weekly art sessions.

The competition, sponsored by Shoemart Philippines, Inc., brought together artists aged 4 to 12 years from public and private elementary schools around the metropolis.

Twenty-three participants were in the 4 to 7 years old category, while 34 joined the 8 to 12-year-old grouping.

"We realize that the children are the most important, because they will be the ones to carry on what we are doing," Heinrich told the Inquirer.

Children's turn

"It's been seven months now since action have been running [environment] laws and we want to pass the children to the street area," she added.

By early afternoon, judges picked the three best works in each category through a system that combined 50 points for originality and another 50 for "freedom of expression."

Awarded first place and a cash prize of ₱3,000 in the first category was Barbara David, 5, 4th-year old Cross Fence Homeowners School, awarded second and given a cash prize of ₱2,000, while Taylor Silverio, 7, placed third with a prize of ₱1,000.

Winners, too

In the second category, the work of Michelle Pingol, an 11-year-old student from Sarrosa Quezon Elementary School, bested 80 other entries, winning ₱5,000. Modesto Bautista, 11, of Guadalupe Viejo Elementary School, took home ₱2,000 for placing second. Hamed Jalal placed and awarded ₱1,000 was Hagie Ibn Lesaren, 12, from Makati Elementary School.

Even though she did not place in the contests, Clarissa Gojoso, 8-1, sixth grader at the F. Manalo Elementary School in Sucat, took home a worthwhile lesson from joining the competition.

"My mom is for one in taking care of nature, because it's where we get what we need," said Gojoso in Filipino.

Visions in color

Through her eyes, the forest park was seen in lively colors of orange, green, yellow and blue.

Her work placed a heart-shaped line of trees in the center of her "canvas," an illustration bound to reveal the heart were supposed to be people, whom she said represented those who should be protecting the environment.

Pereno said the competition was only the beginning of a series of activities meant to draw crowds to the park, a dispersed 2.5 hectare property, which the Manila City Government is also hoping daw to.

"If there were many people aware of its existence, maybe the city government will realize the need for it and not construct buildings over it," said Heinrich.

The city government had said that the Manila Division of City Schools (DCS) owned the property and plans the construction of a new office building in the park.

Antivice drive in Las Piñas

VICE lovers exist.

With this battle cry, Las Piñas Mayor Imelda Aguilar ordered city police chief Supt. Benjamin Serrano to enforce a continuing drive against illegal vice.

Aguilar said she was holding Serrano responsible for removing and preventing the proliferation of illegal vices like drugs and gambling, especially among the youth.

The mayor specifically ordered action against the sale of shabu and marijuana, and the operations of illegal cockfights.

QC council makes big waste producers pay a high price

By Tina G. Santos

THE QUEZON City Council has raised the base fee for the collection of bulky and special wastes in the city.

Under the amended version of the Quezon City Revenue Code, residents and businesses that collectively generate bulky and special waste would now have to pay an amount equivalent to the cost of a truck's rental per trip.

The members of the rules and regulations for the new collection scheme will be announced by the city government.

In amending the fee structure, local officials explained that existing charges were from 10 years ago and were already outdated.

Once the new charges are in effect, garbage hauling by a 10-wheeled truck would be P5,151 per trip, while that of a six-wheeled truck would cost P2,045.75. On the other hand, the services of a mini dump truck would cost P1,675.

Special operations

Only dump trucks contracted by the city for its special operations are authorized to haul solid waste.

Bulky and special waste refer to waste materials not normally collected by garbage contractors, including construction and demolition materials, furniture, metal and plastic scraps, and commercial and industrial wastes, such as furniture, lamps, bookcases, filing cabinets and other similar items.

Excluded from the provisions of the new rules and regulations governing the collection of bulky and special waste are materials arising from cleaning activities of the city's Special Action Team and the Metro Manila Development Authority, those generated by government institutions and those that are illegally dumped along major thoroughfares.

HOME ON THE STREET
Children of scavengers wait for their parents inside their makeshift house along the busy streets of NIA road in QC.

Muslim cemetery up for face-lift

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PINAGS, some attention

The Taguig City Muslim Cemetery in Bambang Village, purportedly the only Muslim Cemetery in Luzon, is scheduled for a much-needed rehabilitation this year.

Yesterday morning, the Office of Muslim Affairs said the barangay government launched the rehabilitation program for the five-hectare cemetery which then said had turned into a haven of drug addicts and fugitives.

The cemetery has also become the dumping ground of salvage victims—instead of being a reverend site—because of years of neglect, barangay chair Ustadza Pangandaman said.

Not not only the cemetery is languishing.

Taguig City Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano said that after 25 years, Bambang Village remained under-developed.

Pangandaman, who has been living in the village for 12 years, told the lawmen the village still did not have a decent hospital.

"During emergencies, we still have to rush our residents on the Philippine General Hospital or to Rizal," he said in Filipino.

The village has no water connection yet. And some parts have no electricity.

The reason? The National Housing Authority, which maintains the area, owes the Manila Electric Company about P1 million in unpaid bills, Mayor Freddie Tiñga said.

He said the local government wanted to put up streetlights in the village but Meralco would not allow them to until the NHA had settled its debt.

Sadly, residents had been taking advantage of the dark alleys, thugs-turned-addicts said.

The good news is there is already a P10 million foreign grant specifically for the development of Bambang Village, Tiñga said.

The fund is still with the national government.

In the meantime, improving life in the village would have to start with the dead.

Pangandaman said barangay officials already wanted their own chute and guest program for the cemetery.

However, they could not afford to install streetlights because of the barangay's limited budget.

But Tiñga said they were already negotiating with Meralco. And if plans push through, street lights would be installed in the cemetery and on streets in the village by June.

The government and natural resources department will also donate seedlings to be planted on the cemetery grounds, said OMA plant and policy director Rito Edano.

During yesterday's launch, interior and local government Secretary Angelo Reyes talked about solidarity and cooperation between Muslims and the government.

He said the rehabilitation of the cemetery was a great step forward.

Anti-illegal recruitment task force holds 6 'OFWs'

By Nikko Dizon

TWO OF them could not help but cry over the "embarrassment," they said, of having been duped by illegal recruiters, apprehended by law enforcers at the international airport, and having to go back home to relatives and friends who have wished them well in their new jobs abroad.

They were among the six Filipino women who were prevented from leaving the country yesterday afternoon by the Presidential (sic) Illegal Recruitment Task Force (PIRTF).

Held at the Centennial Terminal of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Piaid, four bound for Busan, South Korea were found holding fake Overseas Employment Certificates (OEC), while the other two, who were supposed to be foreigners were "tourist workers," said Edgardo Cuerva, supervisor of the PIRTF Naia.

Piaid agents stopped the six women from leaving amid questions posed by airport personnel, immigration officials and even Filipinos bound for abroad on the "most suitable" of the anti-illegal task force.

Some airport insiders are airing complaints that certain passengers who said they left behind by PIRTF operatives.

Piaid" was swayed by President Arroyo to crack down on illegal recruiters and curb the increasing number of undocumented Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

Task force agents were questioning suspicious of Filipino passengers at the Naia terminal when they intercepted the women before the latter were able to check into their flights.

Cuerva said in an interview that the two women bound for Singapore admitted that they intended to work in the city-state.

In the case of the four Busan-bound women, Cuerva said they admitted they had authentic work visas from the South Korean—issuing the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) counter at the airport verified that their OECs were fake.

Cuerva said an OEC was issued to an OFW after the POEA had authenticated his or her employment contract abroad and other pertinent papers.

"The OEC certifies that the person leaving is a documented OFW," he said.

The Busan-bound women, who asked not to be named, told the hapless that a Korean national by the name of Mr. Han interviewed them in Makati City some three months ago about job opportunities in Busan, South Africa, they received their visas and were told that they had work waiting for them at a hotel for a monthly salary of $500.

The women, aged 23, 25, 27 and 32, said that at the airport yesterday a man and a woman who were local workers of Mr. Han, handed them their passports with the OECs attached. They said they did not know that the OECs were fake. They also could not identify or even describe to Piaid agents the couple who gave them their passports.

A Piaid agent told the hapless that during interrogation, it appeared that one of the women was a relative of one of the women, which was why they claimed ignorance on the intention of their companions.

One of the two Singapore-bound women silently wept in a corner of the Piaid office, as her companion told the agency "It's embarrassing to go home."

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Concern for safety kills 2 in Tondo

By Tarra F. Quismundo

CORAZON over overloaded power connections in their communities once two more died from it Tondo, Manila, last night.

Bulletin, shot in close range, instantly killed Sabas Empreso and Jun Sevilleja Rodrigo, inside a barangay outpost in the dense community of Isla Pacing Bata.

"When I got there, I saw him sprawled on the floor... his face was blown up. There my brother-in-law was shot in the head," related Empreso's wife.

Empreso, 31, a coordinator of the People's Movement Against Poverty, his 20-year-old brother-in-law and another friend, went to the barangay outpost at about 11:20 p.m. after they heard electricity cables crackle on the electric post in front of the barangay outpost.

"They wanted to check the electric post because power was already fluctuating. To do that, they would need to climb up the roof of the barangay outpost," said case investigator SPO3 William Gondayanan.

The electric post, said Gondayanan, was used to illegally connect electricity lines to the community.

Alarmed that the sparks might cause fire to the crowded neighborhood, the men sought permission from the patrol leader, Delta Alpalmo, to climb up the roof, Gondayanan said.

But Alpalmo, one of the suspects in the shooting, reportedly did not allow the men to climb the cables. A heated argument ensued, in the middle of which Alpalmo reportedly ordered one of his men to shoot at Empreso.

"Mine habulo ka na diyan, arestuin mo na. (Mister, you're in charge, finish him now)," related the third man who came with the Empreso brothers to the outpost, quoting Alpalmo.

Three suspect Rudolf Capel, alias Bruner, or Abner, allegedly fired his shotgun at Empreso. Another man only known as Jerome shot Rodrigo.

Invitation to Japanese University Admission for International Students Examination

De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde is honored to announce that it is an Official Testing Center for the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO). The JASSO provides information and consultation on studies in Japan, promotes short-term student exchanges, offers follow-up services for former international students in Japan, and assists in other international educational exchanges.

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The application period for the EJU, which covers Japanese as a Foreign Language, Science, Japan and the World, and Mathematics, runs from February 21 to March 10, 2005. Applications will not be accepted beyond March 10. Testing date is scheduled for June 19, 2005.

Examination fee is PhP250, exclusive of mailing costs.

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BUSINESS

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EIKI
BRAIN

Gov't works to spare the poor from taxes

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance and the Senate committee on ways and means are out to ease the impact of the increase in the value-added tax on the purchasing power of wrapped families by exempting them from paying income taxes.

The DOF and the Senate committee are now looking at a proposal to lift the tax burden on households with at least six members earning an annual income of P120,000 and below.

According to Cesar Purisima, DOF chief, Senator Alfonso and the members of the committee on ways and means have come up with the idea amid stiff opposition from the proposed increase the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

Critics, especially by militant groups, have described the proposed VAT increase as anti-poor.

"Based on the grocery data, we believe that for a family of six to live decently you need to earn at least P120,000 a year," Purisima said during a press briefing Friday. "We want to make sure that this amount of income is not taxed, and we are looking at how can we neutralize the impact of additional VAT on a family of six."

But the DOF still has to make sure that the government's income tax collection will not be eroded, Purisima said.

If families currently belonging to the bottom of the income tax brackets were to be exempted from the income tax

PURISIMA

NEA posts financial turnaround, nets ₱2M

By Reena V. Dominguez

THE NATIONAL Electrification Administration reported it had overcome a six-year financial turnaround saga that cost ten billions of pesos as it posted a net income of P2 million in 2004.

NEA said in a statement the amount was a dramatic recovery from the P6-billion net loss it suffered in 2003.

In a statement, NEA administrator Edith Bueno said the turnaround was brought about by the final discipline the agency followed since the enactment of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act in 2001.

The law mandates the reorganization of NEA as well as the disposal of some of its assets.

Bueno said NEA could be reorganized or restructuring drastically cut its workforce by 57 percent, which led to savings of some P227 million in 2004. She explained that before streamlining NEA, the agency's budget for personnel expenditures was pegged at P326 million.

Also, about P40 million allowed for organizational expenses was left untouched. "Our efforts in NEA's reorganization is to close down its unprofitable and warehousing."

Further, major reforms such as the restructuring of loan arrangements of 11 electric cooperatives to improve their financial standing and cope with their mounting obligations to NEA improved significantly. NEA's financial position, Bueno added.

"The implementation of reforms has pushed NEA to become more responsive to the needs of the electric cooperatives to help them become competitive under a deregulated power industry," she said.

Bueno said cooperatives gearing up for competitiveness within the deregulated environment may now avail themselves of three additional windows opened by the NEA, namely: equity financing scheme, single-digit systems loss program, and direct wire credit facility.

NEA and the country's 119 electric cooperatives have already extended the benefits of electrification to 36 million people in 32,000 barangays and 1,462 towns and cities.

The government aims to provide electricity to all of the country's 42,000 barangays within the decade.

Bueno said the continuing energy consultation and recovery programs that Malacañang has been advocating also contributed notably to the savings incurred by the agency.

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DOTC wants LRT-1 expansion deferred due to fund lack

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation has directed the Light Rail Transit Authority to scrap or at least defer the P9-billion capacity expansion of LRT Line 1 for lack of budget.

Unless the railway agency could find other sources of financing to address the budget gap, according to a senior transport official, the project should be deferred.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza wrote the LRTA board last week to inform the agency that the government has no budget to finance the Line 1 capacity expansion project, according to Transport Assistant Secretary Roberto Ongkiko.

The official said the LRTA could use the proceeds of a 12-million-euro loan from Belgium to finance the repair of 22 broken trains. The P9 billion in fund needed for the expansion will be spent mainly for the acquisition of 12 units of four-car trains.

But the World Bank, through investment arm International Finance Corp., is pushing for the $136-million Line 1 upgrade to be funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, according to DOTC.

The government earlier scrapped road-based and airport projects also under BOT financing. The Japanese financing agency had committed to lend 16 billion yen (roughly P9 billion) mainly to increase Line 1's passenger capacity from 27,000 per hour per direction to 40,000 passengers per hour per direction.

"We would like to advise the LRTA board and management that the

LRTA aims to beef up its fleet by acquiring 12 new trains.

finish completion of the agency's expansion program is one of the major conditions to and part of the government's obligations under the pre-privatization private partnership with ISM Latrabu for the project," Sergey Grewal, IFC program manager for advisory services in train said in a letter to the LRTA board.

The IFC is the government's consultant in the extension of the LRT Muntinlupa-Baclaran line to Cavite.

Grewal said the "proper operation of an extended integrated line requires the existing line's capacity and performance to be consistent with the project design."

"We respectfully request the LRTA and the Philippine government to reach an early resolution of this matter," he added.

Ongkiko said the LRTA might have to defer the Line 1 capacity expansion until the government's finances improved. He said that of LR-TAs 91 trains, only 66 were running. With 22 trains stalled, he said the railway agency had been incurring losses.

Mendoza said that of the P3.1 billion budget for foreign-assisted projects next year, the transport department could only provide a P20-million budget-saver for the Line 1 expansion.

Ongkiko explained that under the revised budget and finance department's guidelines, the projects financed by official development assistance would have to secure a full budget cover in the duration of the project and not just a budget for the construction funding.

In short, the P9 billion Line 1 capacity expansion would have to secure a budget cover for the entire amount while the project is being undertaken.

Supplementing agencies are now required to include in their medium-term program the entire loan amount including the counterpart portion before a project is implemented," explained the transport official.

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What's in a bomb?

MINDANAWORLD
Jyji Rayero-Ekart

ABOUT the romance and the fun of celebrating Valentine's Day, we had a bomb explosion right here in our city. Almost at the same time, there were other bombings in near by General Santos City and in Makati.

At that very moment, I am sure without many of us Davaoenos guessed and did come to mind thinking, Will we let this bomb scare our lives again? Will we allow the bomb to dampen our spirits once again?

The very next day, the tourism secretary, headed by everyone's favorite Davao 'tourism president, Art Boncato, gathered and discussed among themselves the necessary actions to be taken to avoid any damage that there was nothing to fear from this bomb. The entire tourism team appeared in a media forum at the Bluwin Polo and enthusiastically announced that, despite the recent incident, not a single cancellation of rooms occurred, or of any forthcoming conference or event. Occupancy rates remained at an all time high.

As with our neighbors in General Santos, the Dabawenyos' ability to withstand trials and difficulties will once again be put to the test. Our experiences in handling even bigger problems in the past should allow us to rise to the challenge with relative ease this time around.

All that we need to do is to unite ourselves once more and to show the world that Davao remains the most peaceful and livable city. The task of confidence building must and should start from each and every one of us living here. Together, we have to show the world that business is still back in Davao, that tourists still continue to come and enjoy our beaches and our mountain resorts, as well as the abundance of fruits and flowers.

We lose the battle once we start allowing ourselves to wallow in self pity and think that we have to start all over again. We should build on past accomplishments to be able to let the world see and understand that the future remains bright for Davao City.

Our local government must show strength and be able to straighten clear-cut plans on ensuring the safety of its citizens and guests. The tourism sector must be able to create even more events, media blitzes and special tour packages so that people will keep coming. Local entrepreneurs must show that this was a minor disturbance, such as palpable impact on the local economy, by moving on with their plans for new businesses or expansions. Our partners in media must make sure that all efforts of the community are communicated to the world.

The Feb. 14 bombing must drive us to work harder so that we put Davao back on its feet as fast as possible. Let us stop talking about the negative impact of this event on our tourism and economy. Let us talk about positive actions that we plan to do to bring back confidence in Davao's peace and order.

Moreover, we united is now a shared one, as everyone knows that other places were simultaneously affected. This is not something that happened to Davao, or even Mindanao, alone. Therefore, rebuilding "negative images" focusing on specific places just won't cut it this time. To say that so-and-so city isn't safe because it has a bombing problem doesn't really apply under the circumstances. Can you make that same statement of, Makati, for instance?

This incident can, therefore, also be an opportunity for synergy between and among cities. The respective LGUs, business chambers and NGOs of the affected cities can join hands and create an expanded network of corporate synergy and joint promotion.

Obviously, whoever orchestrated these simultaneous incidents wanted to make a really big statement, unmindful of the lives that were lost in the process. Let's turn the tables around and show them that the Filipino they wanted to taint their spirits had done nothing to dampen ours.

We all know that bombs are nothing for a country that has the determination and the commitment to move forward!

Jyji Rayero-Ekart is a strong advocate for Mindanao; member of the Davao Development Council and former chair of the Metro Davao Business Council; vice chair of the Mindanao Commission of Women and the Regional Gen Board; and chair of the Metro Davao TYPE Email comments to jyjiekart@yahoo.com)

ICT companies to hire 46,000 workers this year, survey shows

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE QUALITY of education must be improved and other programs must be aligned with the needs of the information and communication technology sector so ICT-enabled service firms are expected to hire 46,000 new workers within the year, a survey among industry players and others showed.

Conducted by the IT Association of the Philippines in the last quarter of 2004, the survey covered 214 ICT and non-ICT companies, most of which reported at least P1 billion in revenues each.

ITAP president Ulpiano A. Fontanos said the study found that the local demand for ICT workers would grow to over 200,000—translating to 46,000 new hires in 2005—with a majority being absorbed in ICT-enabled service businesses.

Fontanos explained that for purposes of the survey, an ICT worker was defined as one to be robust in the following fields: database design, development and administration; digital media such as animators and artists; enterprise system analysts and integration such as process analysts and application integrators; and network design and administration.

The study also considered as ICT workers those who work on programming and software engineering; technical support; technical writing and training; IT sales and marketing; contact center; data encoding; and transcription.

Also, Fontanos said the study showed that the low industry acceptance rate for job applicants of 1-3 percent was "a cause of concern" as this might mean an oversupply of ICT graduates and/or the lack of quality education produced by the system.

"In general, it is believed that the Philippine ICT workforce is technically competent but lacking in soft and business skills," she said.

"In terms of future skills, others should be found in the need for critical thinking, project management and technical skills such as networking, programming and database related skills[sic]," she added.

The major areas that need to be addressed

Filipinos as 'poor' savers

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

MONEY makes the world go round, or as a popular Broadway musical declares. In business, financing or the lack of it determines how much working capital and investment resources an enterprise can mobilize, which in turn can spell the success or failure of the business. At the economy-wide level, financing determines how expensive or sluggish the productive sectors can be, thereby determining their capacity to generate jobs. In turn, the financial resources needed to fuel investments and overall development ultimately come from the savings that can be mobilized in the economy.

Low saving rate

Here is where the Philippines has a problem. Among its fast-paced Asian neighbors, our country consistently had the lowest saving rate, measured as the ratio of gross domestic savings (GDS) to gross domestic product (GDP), the latter being a measure of national income. Based on data from the Asian Development Bank, our 18.8 percent saving rate in 2003 was lower than Singapore's 44.0, Malaysia's 41.9, Thailand's 31.1, and even Indonesia's 23.1 percent. Looking at these figures, one is tempted to believe that a country's level of development is broadly correlated with—and probably determined by—its ability to save. One might ask, could it be the other way around, i.e. the level of development determines the saving rate? That Indonesia has a lower per capita income and yet a higher saving rate than the Philippines leads me to think otherwise.

Saving is measured as what gets left after deducting all expenditures and debt payments from disposable income (that is, income after taxes). There are four general groups of savers in an economy: households and unincorporated enterprises, private corporations, government corporations and the government itself. As for the last item, persistently large budget deficits have made government a net contributor in national savings. Even then, our private saving is still supposedly low relative to the region.

Why do Filipinos save as little in comparison to their Southeast Asian neighbors? The standard answer has tended to be, "because most Filipinos are too poor to save." An economist friend claims that Filipinos who do save (i.e. those with higher incomes) have savings rates even exceeding that of the Singaporeans. But for the majority of Filipino households who are poor enough to support their needs, we could not expect any savings to come from their direct, he says, and thus even all saving rate is low.

Wealth in the poor

This is where other colleagues disagree. We may not see it readily, but the poor do save, say those who have actually studied and worked with the poor. And there remains great potential there for saving. They point to the billions of pesos that go through the *sibuyan* among the supposedly illegal numbers game that is all over the place in the metropolis, and which preys primarily on low income groups. That's gambling, of course, and not saving.

But researchers have documented how poor families responsibly to the rainy days and to work up an apostle's commodities—not durables like jewelry or appliances, but items just sizeable enough to—and there still those all in terms of rainy day cash. That is saving that day-by-day accumulation of one cent Baboy keeps a pig tied up in her backyard, knowing it will whatever kitchen refuse she can collect from neighbors, and an occasional kilo or two of grain farmyards feed she can afford to buy. She expects to cash in on it in June, to time for the start of school expenses. And she is a fairly common practice especially in the rural areas. That is saving. And then there are the *paluwagan* schemes one seems to find in every squatter neighborhood, reportedly among the women. Again, that is saving.

Who says the poor don't save? They do, except that their savings never find their way into the formal financial system, nor the official statistics on saving. Chances are, our low saving rate as officially reported is substantially understated, given the productive forms of saving actually undertaken by the poor, which put together would amount to substantial sums. What more if we can channel the daily minute mites of these stabs to turning into savings schemes instead?

Deepening the pool

Turning the economy's savings into investments by enterprises requires intermediaries or mechanisms to link the savers to the investors. In the Philippines, banks still account for about 82 percent of financial resources in the system. How much of savings actually go through the banks as deposits, which eventually become the source of loanable funds for investors? Incremental deposits, or the amount of new bank deposits generated in a given year, would give an indication of this. The ratio of incremental deposits to GDP tells us how much of savings are actually channeled through banks. This ratio peaked at 76 percent in 1997, but dropped so only to recover the following year after the Asian financial crisis scared people from keeping their money in the banks. In normal times, more than half of domestic savings probably go through the banks.

But banks need not be the only link. Elsewhere, there are a source of enterprise finance have been declining in importance, as other financial institutions—equity markets, mutual funds, pension funds, etc.—emerge as preferred saving instruments to lure interest yielding bank deposits. There are active efforts underway in the Philippines to clear the policy constraints that have prevented these mechanisms at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the banks in linking savers to investors. Given the above, of special concern to us should be how to channel the substantial savings coming from the lower income groups into the financial pool.

Comments welcome at chabito@perdev.org

"Unexpected reversal of SEC ruling on acquisition of shares creates investment uncertainty"

On February 16, 2005, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) unexpectedly reversed its en banc ruling on the CEMCO acquisition of Union Cement Holdings Corporation (UCHC) shares from Bacnotan Consolidated Industries, Inc. (BCI) and Atlas Cement Corporation.

Prior to the transaction and upon approval by its board of directors, BCI disclosed with the SEC and the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) the proposed investment by CEMCO for the acquisition of UCHC shares.

On July 27, 2004 the SEC en banc ruled and confirmed with the PSE that the Tender Offer Rule is not applicable to the purchase as the transaction is not equity shares of a public company but shares in a majority stockholders of a listed company. The same ruling was disseminated to all stockbrokers.

In reliance and on the strength of the SEC ruling, CEMCO proceeded to acquire UCHC's shares from BCII and Atlas Cement.

This reversal of the ruling by SEC itself and making it retroactive is unexpected and highly unusual. The transaction and subsequent investment into the country was based on precedent and on the SEC ruling of July 27, 2004. This reversal creates further uncertainty for investors in the Philippines.

CEMCO is studying the decision in detail and examining what options are available.

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Ayala's Valentine delights

Cocktails

Victor C. Aganon

of them, upon reporting for work.

Asked why she was divesting herself of the company stock, Ureta, through a spokesperson, said she was now actively engaged in stock market trading.

Bell-bottom blues

THE CASH-RICH National Transmission Corp. is on the market for a brand-new, twin-engine, helicopter, retiring debt (P126 million for that purpose).

But even before the March 7 bidding, one of the bidders, Asian Aerospace, the distributor of Bell helicopters, has already written Malacañang, seeking presidential intervention.

According to the grapevine, Asian Aerospace claims it would be cheaper for the government to simply lease two helicopters for 15 years, maintenance free, for P200 million, which itself, of course is offering.

Money-go-round

■ SM/GMO Apo View Hotel has received a P860-million joint venture proposal from a Japanese-American group, which plans to convert one wing of the 156-room hotel into a retirement home for the Japanese market.

The hot-to, however, is conditioned on Apo View finally securing amicable with Banco Filipino over the hotel's P221-million secured loan.

■ W IHOWS, the shoe and apparel line owned by running economist-developer Walter Brown, has been acquired by Hi-c Hat Marketing, the distributor of Dr. Martens and Nike shoes, from Global Brands.

Global Brands, a local subsidiary of a venture firm controlled by Prudential of United Kingdom, bought the shoe and apparel line, along with Voicecoil and Bugby adhesives, from Brown four years ago.

Heard through the grapevine

THE MOVING Lamborghini Murcielago, BMW 645 Ci and BMW X3 have been returned to their rightful owner, Proclitmer chair William Go, after the latter coughed up a few millions in "mortgage" payments to redeem them from the nebulous secondary market.

Bets for hot cars having been removed, the emails charges against former ADB president Ishaq Akhmar, whose checks had been fraudulently used to acquire the three luxury vehicles, may now be settled out of court, provided Akhmar reimburse the expenses.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@inq7.net)

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1.00M - 4,999,999	6.000	6.250	6.375	6.500
5.00M - 9,999,999	6.250	6.500	6.625	6.750
10 million and up	6.500	6.750	7.000	7.250

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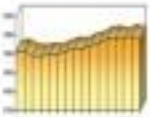
Market expected to consolidate

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez



...expect the market to...

...sure a very strong signal to legislators that a lot of work had to be done, including the passage of needed tax reforms.

The downgrade, he said, would not negatively affect most Philippine companies, which were also cited by Moody's, since most of blue-chip companies showed strong cash flows. Moody's has yet to release its ratings on Philippine companies which analysts expect to be aligned with its recent sovereign ratings downgrade.

Alfred Ty, head of research at CIIA Phils., said that aside from asking the government to pass crucial tax reforms, the sovereign downgrade was also a wake-up call for it to set up another revenue-raising measure such as the privatization of power generation assets of the National Power Corp. and the sale of government's 44 percent stake in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

PNB president Frances Lim, for his part, said he was optimistic that the downgrade "will not have a long-term adverse effect on the stock market."

"Investors still see through the good fundamentals underlying the macro-economic picture of our country, the better-than-expected GDP performance, record-high performance of overseas remittances, concrete measures being adopted by government to contain the deficit...confidence of the local investors in our stock market...is unique here and the good news from the corporate sector will sustain the bullish performance of our stock market," Lim said.

He added that with higher interest rates on debts that might follow the credit ratings downgrade, companies might be encouraged to raise funds from initial public offerings at the stock market, instead of borrowing from banks.

"This is a much cheaper alternative to raise capital," he said.

Jose Hotan, head of research at AB Capital Securities Inc., meanwhile said the downgrade was not really a big surprise since investors have it as an excuse to sell their shares after the stock market's recent bull run.

"The big picture is still bullish. This is just a correction within a bull market," he said.

Petron's Tulong Aral goes beyond basic education

By Abigail L. Ho

At P60-counter's budget deficit ballooning, the budget for education soars. While education seems to remain one of the government's top priorities, the reality is that more and more children are not going to school.

In Metro Manila alone, some 534,000 children are deprived of education. And even those that are actually given the opportunity to go to school are either not getting good enough education or are forced to eventually drop out due to poverty.

If children are indeed the country's hope for the future, then this country's future may be in serious danger.

This was exactly what prompted Petron Corp., through Petron Foundation, to take on a task that could, in one way or another, help make the country's future a little less bleak.

"There was an urgent need to improve the quality of education, particularly in the primary level because that's the very basic foundation of education," said Petron Foundation executive director Marilou Uriel.

So then Petron Foundation started looking for students to help—out-of-school youths who belong to urban poor communities as identified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

STUDENTS from Zamora Elementary School in Pandacan, Manila, browse through books available at the Petron booth during the recently concluded CSR days held in celebration of the 5th Corporate Social Responsibility Week.

Through the Tulong Aral ng Petron program, launched in 2002 in cooperation with the DSWD, 1,000 scholars from 12 municipalities in Metro Manila were chosen. These scholars would then get the necessary assistance to finish their elementary education.

Since public elementary education is almost free of charges, the Tulong Aral program will provide its scholars with other forms of assistance. Including school supplies, uniforms, shoes, school bags and meal allowances.

Tulong Aral scholars and their parents will also be allowed to participate in various support programs like tutorials, story telling sessions and remedial classes for the children and parenting workshops and livelihood programs for their parents.

All scholars are also gathered every Christmas for a get-together sponsored by the Petron Foundation.

"The program really goes beyond just basic education. That is a long-term deliberate effort," Uriel said.

Go and multiply

Here is how the program works: the first 1,000 scholars, if they actually finish the first grade without dropping out, will be scholars for another two years. The same goes for the program progresses, the number of scholars under Tulong Aral will grow at a pace of 1,000 a year.

Assuming that there will be no dropouts at all for each batch of scholars, Tulong Aral will have 1,000 beneficiaries on its first year, 2,000 on its second year until 6,000 on its third year and so on. This is because the first 1,000 scholars will have already moved on to the second grade, at the same time that a new batch of first grade scholars are welcomed to the fold.

Starting school year 2002-2003, out of the 1,000 six-year-old classes to participate in the program, 930 actually finished the first grade, with 20 ranking first in their respective classes.

The following school year, 2003-2004, as new batch of scholars came in, for 970 out of 997 scholars were able to finish the second grade.

For school year, 2004-2005, when a new batch of scholars was again taken in, the total number of Tulong Aral scholars had gone up to 2,903.

Group effort

The program gets help not only from Petron as a company but also from Petron's employees, in their personal capacity.

Uriel said it took only about P4,700 to put a child through a year of elementary schooling. Seeing that this was something they could actually afford, Petron employees themselves jumped onto the bandwagon by adopting one or two scholars or donating a month's salary.

Some employees even found more creative ways to help, she said. She donating prizes won by Petron's racing cars in the Vitara Rally Challenge to the program.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Through the program, Petron employees were also encouraged to help out in the program's fund-raising activities. Some employees even volunteered to teach the children.

Petron Foundation also tapped the help of Petron's dealers and suppliers to help in the program. Some of them even donated their savings, donating the proceeds from business that they set up, and dropping some of their earnings into the Tulong Aral scholarship fund.

While already helping so many students through the Tulong Aral program and the Petron family, Uriel said there was still a huge number of poverty-stricken kids who deserved to be given a chance at education.

This then sparked the idea of getting other companies to start their own primary education assistance programs, with the option to use the Tulong Aral model as their basis.

To help make things even easier for corporations searching to engage in a similar corporate social responsibility project, Petron Foundation consolidated in a book some information and poverty-related data as well as its own experiences in starting an elementary education assistance program.

It was a timely effort on the part of Petron as, Uriel said, the League of Corporate Foundations—to which Petron Foundation belongs—and rehabilitation refounding, was trying to focus its attention on education-related projects.

"We as the League of Corporate Foundations wanted to extend our time line and focus on primary education and youth development programs," she said.

Other companies, she said, could choose to either set up their own elementary education assistance programs or take it to high school or college subsidize the graduates of the Tulong Aral program.

Still others could opt to get the scholars employed eventually, she said.

"The (Tulong Aral) program is actually not a program that is specific to Petron. We want to be a catalyst. Other companies can use our system," she said.

Stopping poverty cycle

According to the 2001-2004 Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, basic components comprise comprehensive human development, which will ultimately result in poverty reduction. These four components include investments in education and training, enhanced health care, expanded access to shelter and protection of vulnerable groups.

Petron decided to focus on the education aspect of poverty alleviation through the Tulong Aral program.

"Tulong Aral is long term in nature as it is very well connected with global and national programs and agenda. This is the best contribution a company can have: a program that starts with elementary education," Uriel said.

Because the future lies with the children, what better way to help ensure a brighter future for the country than to equip these children early on with the proper tools to face what lies ahead.

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ICT companies to hire 46,000 workers this year, survey shows

Related story: B6

During the conference, experts said the local ICT sector was expected to keep its dynamic upward to growth especially in the call center sector.

Government data show that investments in ICT services went up 40.4 percent to P6.07 billion in 2004 against P4.4 billion in 2003.

At the same time, analysts projected that the revenues from local call center operations would reach $2.4 billion within the years, enabling the country to overtake India's global lead in the sector.

Judging the judges

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Rosendo C. Gonzaga

JUSTICE Artemio Panganiban talked about the Supreme Court's reform program of the judicial system at the monthly forum of Efficiency Solutions Inc. on Feb. 11. The occasion was also the 50th anniversary of Ruby Kalaw-Jugo.

Although I went from a family of lawyers (my late father started practicing law in Naga City in 1924 when there were only about a dozen lawyers in all of Camarines Sur), I usually dozed them to speeches by lawyers, even Justices of the Supreme Court. I just cannot stand boredom.

But I was there because Atty. Jimkong, the incoming national president of the Philippine Association of Realtor Persons (PARP), had been badgering me to attend the monthly forum of Efficiencies. Besides, I wanted to listen to Justice Panganiban. The decision he wrote on the ruinous loss last December was considerably charitable, particularly the part on the mathematical side of the case.

I have heard it said that the law is always known about math, the better are his chances of leading in the Supreme Court. So, any Justice who knows his sums, as Panganiban does, has my deepest respect.

I thoroughly enjoyed Panganiban's talk. He certainly kept me awake. Nowadays, it is easy to snooze off while listening to a boring speech. Me, I always like a guy who does not take himself too seriously even if he were a Justice.

Later, Dakanay sent me a printed copy of the speech. Let me comment on a couple of points that he raised by Panganiban.

He says, "It is not enough that judges be walking databases of the Constitution, the law and jurisprudence. They must also have a working knowledge of the arts, history, health, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, physics, psychology, economics, and the latest blockbusters and biotechnologies."

I suggest that they should also have a working knowledge of insurance. Judging from a recent decision on the documentary stamp tax on policies, the court last could not plumb the mysteries of insurance.

Panganiban told an Ilia story: "When I was still practicing law a decade ago, a wealthy businessman visited me. He told me, 'I know that your law office is composed of competent but respectful lawyers, who are experienced in the labyrinths of the law. But my question is, do you also know the judge in whose sala my case is pending? It is good to know the law, but it is better to know the judge. "Upon hearing those remarks, my partners and I respectfully declined the case, even if it meant losing a sizable retainer."

This brought back the favorite story of my late brother Lasing, who practiced law in Naga City for almost 50 years.

One day Lasing called on the abbot of the local Carmelites, who had earlier phoned to say that the friars had a legal problem. The abbess, who was a childhood friend, and when during the rainy season, the creek running through their property overflowed because their neighbor next door had filled up the creek downstream and built a house against the friars' objection.

The issue had decided to sue. Cluttered this might be, they knew what was going on downtown. The abbess said, "We have come to know that one of the judges is a cousin of our neighbor. So, we don't want the case to land in his sala. We prefer that Judge Cruz (not the real name), who is a devout Catholic, hear the case. What should we do?"

Lasing said, "Pray." Following that advice, the Carmelites of Naga and Iriga concentrated the heavens with their prayers.

At the raffle to choose the judge, Lasing told the clerk of court, "Let the lots draw by just a seven-up. It will not count." The clerk drew Judge Cruz. Then Lasing said, "The second draw is the one that counts." The clerk drew Judge Cruz again. Then Lasing said, "Just for fun, please draw for the third and last time." The clerk, for the third and last time, drew Judge Cruz.

Of course, the Carmelites won the case, hands down. The neighbor had to tear down his house and dig up the creek.

There is more to our judicial system than meets the eye.

BOC sees ₱390M in profit

By Doris C. Dumlao

BOC Commissioner, the bonding arm of Asiaworks Guarantee, aims to post P390 million in net income after tax and loss provisioning this year, a sharp improvement from P77 million last year.

In a recent press briefing, BOC president Rod de Mesa said the bank had guaranteed a net income after tax but before provisions of P868 million in 2004 compared to P620.67 million a year ago.

De Mesa, however, noted that the bank participated in losses of about P500 million, thus slashing the guarantee net earnings.

He said BOC's net income increase last year rose to P1.7 billion from P1.1 billion a year ago. Interest income from peso loans increased by P360 million on account of higher business volumes, improved interest margins and higher collections from past due loans.

The bank also invested over P200 million and hundreds of hours implementing its new core banking systems, which includes the full automation of the deposit system of its 112 branches nationwide.

BOC is also set to dispose of at least P1.5 billion in bad assets through the Special Purpose Vehicle framework by next month and nine P1.2 billion from a ten 2-capital issuance shortly after De Mesa said the bank had secured the approval of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to sell its non-performing assets (NPA) before the current SPV Law expires in April. The bank has already incorporated its own SPV for this purpose.

He added the bank would conduct a second tranche of NPA disposal if Congress agrees to extend the effectivity of the SPV Law.

For the first tranche, De Mesa said three parties had earlier expressed interest to join the bidding for the idle assets, composed of non-performing loans (NPL). The bidders are expected to submit their proposal by the end of the month so that actual transfer can be effected.

"After the transaction, our NPL ratio would be down to a single-digit level, to about 7 percent," De Mesa said.

The SPV Law intends to help banks get rid of their ill-fated banking assets at the earliest possible time at least. The law waived the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and value-added tax (VAT) imposed on sales of such assets and likewise reduced the registration transfer fees by 50 percent.

However, the tax reliefs and other benefits are available only up to April 9 this year, unless Congress approves a two-year extension sought by the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

After the SPV deal, De Mesa said the bank would then by April next P1.2 billion in unsecured, subordinated tier-2 capital.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: CIRCULAR NO. 471 (RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING OPERATIONS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE DEALERS, MONEY CHANGERS AND REMITTANCE AGENTS)

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), in Circular No. 471 issued on 24 January 2005, required all entities and persons engaged or desiring to engage in the business of buying and selling foreign currencies and in the remittance, transfer or transmittal of money on behalf of any person or entity, to register with the BSP.

Who should register and when:

1. Existing foreign exchange dealers (FXDs), money changers (MCs) and remittance agents (RAs) operating as of 17 February 2005 should apply within 90 days from said date. Their branch offices, however, need not apply.
2. New applicants should register before starting operation as FXD, MC or RA.

Following is the schedule of registration by area of operation of the applicant:

Applicant's Area of Operation	Start of Registration
Manila Pasay	February 18, 2005
Quezon City Kalookan Makati	February 25, 2005
Other areas in Metro Manila	March 1, 2005
Provincial areas	February 18, 2005

Sanctions

An existing FXD, MC or RA found operating without BSP application for registration after 17 May 2005 shall be subject to applicable penalties under Section 36 of RA No. 7653 (The New Central Bank Act), i.e., fine of not less than P50,000.00 nor more than P200,000.00 or by imprisonment of not less than two years nor more than 10 years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

Requirements for registration

1. Letter of application
2. Incorporation papers as a foreign exchange dealer/money changer and/or remittance agent authenticated by the Securities and Exchange Commission (for a corporation or a partnership), or Copy of the Certificate of Registration authenticated by the Dept. of Trade and Industry (for a single proprietorship), together with original document
3. Copy of business license/permit from the city or municipality where the business is located and operates
4. List of incorporators/partners/promoters/directors/principal officers, as the case may be; and
5. Notarized Deed or Undertaking to strictly comply with the requirements of all relevant laws, rules and regulations, signed either by the owner, partner, president or officer of equivalent rank.
6. NBI Clearance

Where to obtain the pertinent BSP forms

The Letter of Application and Deed of Undertaking forms are available at the Supervision and Examination Dept. III (SED III) at the BSP Main Office, Manila, and in all BSP regional offices and branches all over the country. Both forms can also be downloaded from the BSP website www@bsp.gov.ph.

Processing fee

Each new and existing FXD, MC or RA shall be charged a processing fee of P1,000.00. Payment shall be made at the BSP Cash Dept., BSP Main Office, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (except holidays), upon presentation of an Order of Payment issued by the SED III.

Where and when to register

Applications for registration may be filed Monday to Friday (except holidays) from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in any of the following BSP offices:

BSP Office	Address	Telephone No.
Supervision and Examination Dept. III, BSP Main Office	Multi-storey Bldg., Lobby (enter Gate 3) BSP Complex Malate St., Malate, Manila	523-24-55; 536-60-71
Cebu Regional Office	Gov. Cuenada Bldg. & F. del Rosario Sts. Cebu City	(032) 254-09-70; 254-14-50
La Union Regional Office	Quezon Ave., San Fernando, La Union	(072) 888-2055; 888-27-88
Davao Regional Office	Quirino Ave., Davao City	(082) 227-60-51; 227-18-05
Angeles Branch	Sto. Entierro St., Angeles City	(045) 888-09-58; 888-43-47
Baliuag Branch	National Highway, Baliuag Norte Baliuag, Bulacan	(077) 760-21-01; 760-21-03
Bacolod Branch	Lacson Ave. Cubaonga Bldg. Bacolod City	(034) 433-21-70; 433-80-33
Bohemian Branch	Cor. Del Pilar & Padre Romero Sts. Cotabato City	(064) 421-73-30; 421-24-17
Cagayan de Oro Branch	National Highway cor. Velez St. Cagayan de Oro	(088) 856-44-25; 857-41-12
Calbiga Branch	Quezon Ave. cor. Bonifacio Ave. Calbiga City	(064) 421-73-70; 421-24-17
Dagupan Branch	Tarelac an, Bonuan Gueset , Dagupan City	(075) 614-09-25; 614-30-27
Dumaguete Branch	Joy Dev. Corp. Bldg., V. Locsin & Demetrio Sts., Dumaguete City	(035) 225-44-05; 225-34-64
General Santos Branch	Pendatun cor. Espinosa St., Gen. Santos City	(083) 552-03-15
Iloilo Branch	BSP Bldg., Bonifacio St., Iloilo City	(033) 336-18-80; 337-86-35
Kalibo Branch	RSL Bldg., Arch. Reyes & G. Pastrana Sts. Kalibo, Aklan	(036) 262-15-75; (62-70-30)
Legaspi Branch	Del Rosario Bldg. II, Rizal Ave., Legaspi City	(052) 480-07-35; 480-85-14
Lucena Branch	Quezon ave., Lucena City	(042) 373-73-22; 710-51-70
Naga Branch	Chua Coc Bldg., Elias Angeles St., Naga City	(054) 811-10-58; 811-24-12
Ozamiz Branch	Circumferential Road, Ozamiz City	(088) 521-02-63
Tacloban Branch	Ujehaga Bldg., Ben. Rivera St., Tacloban City	(053) 325-01-34; 321-35-18
Tuguegarao Branch	Cor. Maliwa & Gonzaga Sts., Tuguegarao Cagayan	(078) 844-19-75; 844-05-43
Zamboanga Branch	LHR Bldg. I, Veterans Ave., Zamboanga City	(062) 991-21-01

Training/Seminar requirement

Prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Registration, the officers and the personnel directly involved in foreign exchange operations are required to attend a seminar on the requirements of the Anti-Money Laundering Law. The Anti-Money Laundering Council will start offering seminars starting April 2, 2005.

Contact persons and telephone numbers

For other details, interested parties may contact the following:

SED III
Contact persons:
Mr. Nestor F. Rillera
Tel. 524-75-11 to 51 (trunk line), local 2580
522-61-62 (direct line)
Fax: 523-24-44
Atty. Conrado A. Reyno
Tel. 524-75-11 to 51 (TL), local 2512
536-60-71 (DL)

Fax: 523-99-80; e-mail: cnreyno@bsp.gov.ph

MSLC (regarding the seminar)
Contact person: Ms. Rosalina D. Rubio
Tel. 521-56-52; 522-09-79
Fax: 524-62-38
e-mail: rubio@bsp.gov.ph
mt_rubio@yahoo.com

Mango exports seen to decline by 20%

By Christine A. Esplicar

THE COUNTRY'S fresh mango exports this year are expected to drop by 20 percent to about 30,000 metric tons due to lower production and anxiety personnels in importing countries, exporters said.

Production of mangoes dropped due to the three consecutive typhoons that hit several parts of the country in the last quarter of 2004.

Earnings from exporting fresh mangoes to Japan and other countries may decline by $2.6-$2.7 million or $40 million as available supply falls short of the members' requirements, Philippine Mango Exporters Confederation Inc. president Roberto Antonio said in an interview Friday.

"We do not expect the same volume that we delivered in 2004. The typhoons damaged the crops that should have been harvested as early as January to begin exports by February," he said.

He added that the mango processors, due to the lack of supply, may not be able to meet their commitments to domestic and foreign buyers.

He said importing countries, including Japan, had started imposing stricter requirements and this might affect their (the country's) exports this year. Japan has been importing about 7,000 tons of fresh mangoes from the Philippines a year.

"Japanese authorities have recently allowed the maximum residue limit to 0.05 ppm (parts per million) from 3 ppm. This is something that local producers and exporters were not prepared for," he said.

Antonio said the industry had appealed to the Japanese government for some relaxation of inspection procedures. Mango exporters are also pushing the extension of the Department of Agriculture to executing their mango producers do not use harmful pesticides in their plantations.

"This is to prepare the industry for the long term. We are afraid the EU (European Union) may be the next to implement certain requirements," he said.

The Philippines is currently the eighth largest fresh mango exporter in the world. It is exporting fresh mangoes to Japan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Malaysia.

The country's major fresh mango exporters include Atsuete Hi-Liu Marketing Corp., Manunuo Dryslade, Dole Asia Ltd. and Diamond Star Agro Products Inc.

SUPPLY from RP falling short of demand.

Robina Farms embarking on expansion program

ROBINA Farms, the agribusiness subsidiary of JG Summit Holdings Corp., will expand its hog-raising operations by putting up farms in the Visayas and Mindanao this year in a bid to cut costs in those.

At present, Robina Farms' operations are concentrated in Luzon.

"We are moving to the Visayas and Mindanao because we would like to take advantage of the P80 (feet and mouth disease)-free status of those areas," Robina Farms president and manager Dr. Dante Bolantes told the business mirror in an interview.

The company is reportedly the third biggest commercial hog raiser in Luzon, after San Miguel Corp.'s Monterey Farms and the Lucio Tan Group's Fortune Farms.

As to Luzon operations, Bolantes said the company would increase the population of its pigs owned by another 150,000 to 180,000 sows. Robina Farms' sows breeder farms are in Tarlac, Rizal and San Miguel, Bulacan. These farms have a combined capacity to produce not less than to 200,000 hogs a year.

Aside from hog farming, Robina Farms is also engaged in poultry farming. It supplies broilers and layer day-old chicks largely to backyard raisers (the company holds about 40 percent of the commercial day-old broiler chicks market and some 15 percent share in layer day-old pullets.)

Robina Farms is part of the Gokongwei Group's extensions of agro-industrial undertakings under Universal Robina Corp., which accounted for almost 12 percent of the conglomerate group's P384.6 billion domestic sales in 2003.

The two other agro-industrial companies are Universal Corn Products Inc., engaged in the manufacture and distribution of animal feeds and glucose, and Robina Gokongwei, which handles the production and distribution of animal health products. Christine A. Esplicar

BUYERS take a look at the product offerings in last year's Philippine Fiesta in New Jersey.

Exhibit in US to showcase RP products, manufacturers

THE PHILIPPINE Fiesta in America 2005 will be held on Aug. 20-21 at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey, United States.

Organized by New York-based Spectral Edition Pens Inc., the event is now on its seventh year and is the largest indoor gathering of Filipino Americans on the east coast with an average attendance of 20,000. It offers an avenue for manufacturers and service providers from the Philippines and the United States to promote and showcase products and services. Moreover, participation of mainstream companies has increased consistently for the past seven years. Big corporations in the United States including Western Union, JP Morgan Chase Co., International Channel, Unilock and Costco are participating in the upcoming mega-event.

Filipino companies vying for a share of the affluent Filipino American market in the US have to contend with an increasing number of multinational companies that have been infusing new marketing campaigns to respond to the rise of the Asian American market as an important growth area.

"These days it's no longer surprising to see Asians, including Filipinos, featured in primetime television and print advertising for a wide range of products and services. Filipino companies can no longer afford to be complacent," says Mila Morales, vice president for marketing of Spectral Edition Pens Inc.

"Some advertising has to be done. Philippines-based companies cannot keep on banking on the assumption that their products and services will continue to be in easy roll among Filipino Americans," she says.

The US Census in 2000 placed the Asian American population in the US at some 12 million, or 4.2 percent of the total population of just over 281 million. After Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans comprise the second largest Asian minority group, leading all Asian nations in total immigration in the 1990s and 90s. But it is not just the headcount that has Americans companies sitting up and taking notice. The Asian American population is the most affluent demographic segment in the US today and holds a more favorable economic profile than the non-Hispanic white population.

Gov't works to spare the poor from taxes

Please turn page B3

some tax, he proposed that the government should then raise the income tax rate of high-earning individuals or companies.

The DOF is looking at increasing the highest income tax rate levels for corporate and individual taxpayers from the current 32 percent to 35 percent, he said.

"That way, we do not lose anything on the income tax collection," the newly appointed finance chief said.

The VAT relief is proposal being pushed by the Arroyo administration includes raising the cuts from 10 to 12 percent, and expanding the coverage of the law by removing the VAT exemption currently enjoyed by some sectors, like doctors and lawyers.

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, earlier suggested that the government should keep the VAT rate at 10 percent, and just remove most VAT exemptions.

But the DOF said that the increase in the VAT rate was necessary because of the huge impact the added revenues would have on the troubled government.

The VAT hike proposal is estimated to yield P35 billion in additional annual revenues.

During a forum on the Philippines' fiscal issues on Saturday, former Finance Secretary Jaime Ongpin defended the proposal to increase the VAT rate.

Ako and the (CEO) were exaggerating when they described the VAT hike as unfair.

Ongpin cited a study which showed that the 12 percent VAT hike would only increase prices by less than 2 percent. He stressed that products like fish and vegetables, commonly purchased by poor families, would not be covered by VAT.

Rep. Joel Lagma, chair of the House committee on ways and means, said that while there could be alternatives, they would not compare with the new VAT proposals—increase in rate and lifting of exemptions...in terms of revenue impact.

The two measures are expected to yield about P68 billion in incremental revenues a year.

BUSINESS

BSP may raise bank reserve requirement

By Dona C. Dominguez

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is considering a hike in the reserve requirement of banks once it sees excess liquidity in the financial system.

In a press briefing, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the institution was more keen on raising the reserve requirement instead of reducing a banking system on overnight borrowings as its potentially worrisome market indicator.

Bankers say there is so much liquidity in the system. But since they still are too cautious in lending to the private sector, they tend to dump their funds with the BSP instead. As such, some bankers expect Buenaventura to restore the daily operations before this month ends.

Turning to a system whereby the BSP pays a lower rate to overnight money placed in excess of P5 billion, in exchange banks to lend out instead of park all their funds with the monetary authority.

But Buenaventura said that the BSP was not yet hard on reviving the daily system. Knowing this would deeply pump out more pesos into the financial system and thus bring down Treasury bill yields.

"If the BSP does a swing, then the banks will liquidate [overnight placements with BSP] and they'll be investing [in T-bills and then will be more system liquidity," Buenaventura said. "The 91-day T-bill rate will be substantially lower and then it could have subsequent interest rate differential."

A narrow differential between domestic and foreign interest rates, Buenaventura noted, would slow down the inflow of peso-dollar investments into the country.

"Rather than raising, we could just broaden the interest," he added. "It will give us less and not increase liquidity in the system."

Buenaventura said that the BSP was now taking a look at the interest of liquidity in the system. He said there might indeed be excess liquidity in the system as indicated by the drop in T-bill rates.

"But that's partly because of the inflow of foreign exchange," the BSP chief said. "The banks are afraid to speculate against the peso because of the likelihood that the peso will strengthen rather than weaken against the US dollar."

"We're still looking at it from an inflation-targeting point of view," he added. "There's some [foreign exchange] volatility in the economy, and that's what we're watching."

The BSP is also concerned whether the banks' lending rates will be affected once the reserve requirement is increased, Buenaventura said.

If it would not affect pressure because of excess liquidity, then the BSP might go ahead with the tightening.

"But it's also possible that this surge in liquidity is temporary," the BSP chief said. "The rates are too low so they don't want to lock in because they are still weighing the risk of whether the government will be successful in its fiscal reform program."

For instance, he said if the proposed value-added tax (VAT) reform would be removed shortly or the power sector restructuring delayed, then would be pressure on interest rates to go up and so can affect the exchange rate.

"That's why they want to keep liquidity in short-term instruments," Buenaventura said. "Banks I think are being cautious because they're not sure what will happen."

Meanwhile, BSP Assistant Governor for economic research Diwa Guinigundo said there was an excess liquidity in the financial system at this time.

"It's just that the banks don't seem to be lending as much as they used to so they have more resources to channel to government securities and BSP [Republic bonds]," Guinigundo said, noting that commercial bank lending grew by only 2.6 percent last year. "[The banks] are saying there's lack of demand, but I don't think so. The private sector complains to have that need for banks, but banks really have to address their non-performing loans because it's a big drag."

PAL won't move to Naia-3 unless gov't makes attractive lease offer, Tan says

By Clarissa S. Bedon

"[MR] Lucio Tan is putting his foot down, saying that the Philippine Airlines will not be moving to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 unless the Arroyo administration makes a 'very attractive offer.'

The PAL chairman and chief executive officer told this morning the flag carrier's operations from Nala Terminal 2 to the new airport facility would be very costly to the airline company.

"We are happy where we are now," said Michael Tan, chief of the Lucio Tan Group of Companies) during a briefing with the business bar week.

According to the report, the airline business is very slow these days and PAL doesn't have the money to move to Nala 3.

"It is expensive to move," Tan said. "Unless the government would give us an attractive offer. If the rental is attractive then we could consider."

PAL is the largest airline operating domestic and overseas routes for passengers and cargo. The Arroyo administration is worried that the Terminal 3 would not be viable without PAL.

The government said it would open Nala 3 for commercial operations by June, after taking over the facility in late December amid unresolved arbitration cases against the private group that built the terminal.

The report said PAL had not even received an attractive lease offer from the government, contrary to the government claims that the flag carrier had agreed to move to Nala 3.

"PAL wants to go, saying that they were ready to transfer to Terminal 3, provided that its domestic and international flights would stay in one level," Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza testified.

The transport chief said the Arroyo administration would like to see Nala 2 for the domestic operations of all other airlines.

He said PAL was also having a hard time filling in slot in flights within Nala 3. "We need the Terminal 3 to be ready for operations," Mendoza added.

"The Arroyo administration is evaluating the requests of airline companies for a moratorium on any increase in airport fees if they would transfer to Nala 3.

He said the plan was to offer a specific monetary level of fees and charges to the new residents of Nala 3. He could not say if the government would keep aviation fees and charges unchanged until the term ends.

Mendoza said that if we make these results to Terminal 3, they feel we would consider to throw the burden of paying for Nala 2," said the transport chief. "But we will not do that. We will make sure that the fees would be reasonable."

Mendoza said that Nala 3 would rely on premiere profits from the retails and other businesses within the terminal so as not to pass on the burden of raising the money from the airlines.

The Arroyo administration is spending about P700 million to upgrade Nala 3, including the construction of a perimeter road connecting Terminal 3 with the other airports, including the cargo warehouse and Nala 1.

Mendoza said ongoing renovation of Terminal 3 should ensure that the facility was reasonably sound. The government earlier said Nala 3 had more than 60 construction defects.

The transport chief said the P700 million the government would be spending would not cover yet the re-establishment of a cargo facility within Terminal 3.

He said the plan was to build cargo-only cargo from within Ninoy Aquino, which would be used by all tenants of the Nala 3 complex.

PAL operates 32 aircraft for its domestic and international passenger and cargo routes. It has been asking the government since Nala 3 was built to convert passenger-to, while all other carriers such as Nala 1, the oldest terminal.

Tan

Government urged to change the way it sets revenue targets

By Michelle V. Rama

THE NATIONAL government should change the way it sets its revenue targets because the goals have little to do with the country's fiscal needs, according to Rep. Joel Lopez, chair of the House committee on ways and means.

"If the government is meeting its targets, then why are we still short of money and why is tax collection only equivalent to 13.5 percent of GDP [gross domestic product]?" Lopez said in a statement. "Something is definitely amiss in the fact that revenue targets are being met."

Lopez explained that the government would need to use the previous year's revenue collection as basis in making a revenue target for a current year.

He said that historic revenue collection should not be made the basis for making a new target.

He then went on to cite the huge revenue leaks that characterized past revenue performances.

He suggested that the collection targets of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs—the two top revenue earners in the government—should take into account the leakages of the previous year.

This means that, hypothetically, if the Bureau of Customs were to lose P100 billion a year due to smuggling, then the amount should be added to its collection target for the current year.

In the case of the BIR, the average 116 leaks of the previous years should be taken into account when it sets its new tax collection target, Lopez said.

The congressman suggested that the implementing rules and regulations of the recently passed Attrition Act of 2005, which are still being drafted by the executive branch, should incorporate the average amount of tax leakages in the past when setting new targets for the BIR and the BOC.

The Attrition Act provides a system of reward and punishment for the government's revenue collectors.

Those who still surpass their collection targets will get incentives, while those who will fail to achieve their collection goals could be dismissed from service.

"My worry is that the government targets are low-ranges-under-the-Attrition law, and therefore it will be giving out incentives without having taken the country out of its fiscal trouble," he said.

"If the government is meeting its targets, then we should already be out of the woods. If it meets its targets, [and] yet we are still in trouble, then there must be something wrong with the targets."

Lopez admitted that plugging all revenue leakages might be too much to expect. Therefore, he suggested that a certain percentage, say 20 percent, of past leakages, be incorporated in the current revenue target.

He said a good starting target would be to improve the government's revenue to GDP ratio from last year's 13.5 percent to 17 percent, which the government already accomplished in 1997.

Senate Finance Secretary Jeanie Antonino, for her part, agreed that the current system of target-setting should be reframed via lawyer refining the level at which the government should be improving its revenue collection.

She also noted that setting a new revenue target based on the nominal GDP growth for a year would not be appropriate because of the notion in the economy that are tax exempt.

She cited last year's GDP growth that was boosted largely by the rise in the output of the agriculture sector.

"GDP alone cannot be the sole basis for setting targets because the agriculture and the IT-sectors, for instance, are not taxed," she said. "But explosive rules on collection in our growing tax base can be [cited]."

This year, the BIR is tasked to collect P548 billion, while the BOC is required to contribute P645 billion to state coffers.

Last year, revenue collection of both agencies exceeded that of the previous year.

In 2004, the BIR collected P475.61 billion, while the BOC collected P122 billion.

Charter firm strengthens Asia service

GLOBAL charter service investor Bombardier Flexjet International wants Asia-Pacific travelers to know that they can now enjoy seamless business travel services through its Hong Kong headquarters and a growing network of charter providers.

"With Bombardier Flexjet International, we are broadening our existing Flexjet Asia-Pacific and Flexjet Europe programs, merging their best practices and combining them with a new operation in the Middle East," said Lincoln Mannion, managing director, Bombardier Flexjet International. "This will enable us to offer customized and fixed-price access to more than 900 business jets worldwide throughout Jet Membership Card."

As the leading business jet manufacturer in Asia-Pacific, with a 20-percent market share and a regional sales headquarters in Hong Kong, Bombardier continues to strengthen its presence in the region by introducing new business aircraft models to our service and by working with regulatory authorities to facilitate corporate travel across countries.

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Insurance firm sees P800 in earnings from new product

By Doris C. Dumlao

LEADING insurer Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philamlife) expects to raise about P800 million this year from a pioneering product that combines term life insurance with an investment linked benefit.

During the launching of All Money Multiplier Thursday night, Philamlife president Rizalino Ocampo said the company was initially offering this new product in two denominations, as there was stronger appetite for the local currency.

Ocampo said the one-decennium MG Money Multiplier would mobilize about P400 billion in new investments this year. Another P400 million, he said, could be raised from a dollar offering of this same product later this year.

The pioneering product, which targets the middle income market, requires a minimum investment of P60,000 a year or about P5,000 a month for 10 years.

"All Money Multiplier is a flexible, convertible high-yielding investment-insurance package that lets your wealth grow and gives you the life protection you deserve," Mendoza said.

The 10-year plan provides the holder with life protection benefits and safeguards investments as well. It also ensures maximum life protection by getting additional coverage in case of an accident while having the benefit of income contribution in the event of cold and permanent disability.

For every purchase of the All Money Multiplier plan, a portion of the premiums will be allocated to an investment fund, or the Philamlife Fixed Income Fund or the Philamlife Equity Fund.

The first is a type of investment in credible corporate and government securities which the latter invests in fixed stocks and other direct equity investments.

Depending on the client's risk appetite, there is likewise the option to apportion the investment between the two funds as well as the switch between the two funds anytime and redeem a portion for emergency needs.

The plan allows the flexibility to pay beyond the required payment period in order to increase the investment portfolio.

"You also have the option of letting your investment pay for your plan and not even pay premium requirement," Mendoza said.

CDC prexy retires

ANGELES

CLARK Development Corp. president and chief executive officer Emmanuel F. Angeles announced Saturday his retirement from government service effective March 10, 2005.

A lawyer and educator by profession, Angeles is coming 69 on July 8, 2005.

"I felt it is time for me to embark on another chapter of my life after successfully achieving what I have initially envisioned for Clark," said Angeles at a luncheon reception attended by family, friends and leaders from the business, government, civic and educational sectors.

On several occasions, Angeles had expressed his desire to leave CDC but was consistently rebuffed by President Macapagal-Arroyo. Angeles assumed office in March 2001 amid imminent labor and economic problems at the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ).

After improving the core sectors of CDC, which heightened investor confidence, there, employment was generated. From 70,300 jobs in 2001, the figure zoomed to 112,536 in 2004, resulting from the increase in the number of local and foreign investments from 268 in 2001 to 936 in 2004. CDC's net income has likewise experienced a steady growth from P5.06 million in 2000 to P27.32 million in 2004.

Angeles and his team shaped Clark into becoming Asia's new best business and tourist destination, anchored on the metropolis concept of development with the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DIA) as crown piece.

Upon his retirement, Angeles will devote much of his time to the Movement for a Strong Philippines (MSP), a non-political, non-profit and non-partisan organization aimed at helping build a strong nation.

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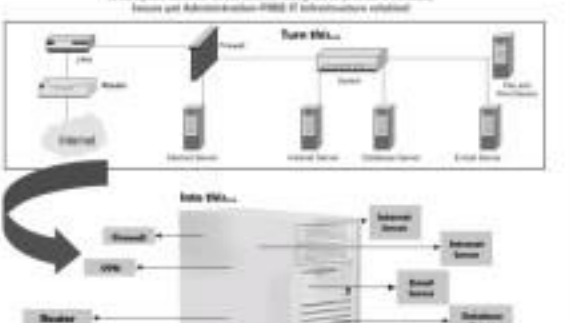

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SHOWROOM & SERVICE CENTER

ARTISTS paint a blooming Baguio /C3

LIFESTYLE

Editor: Chito Bastol-Pormoso
Lifestyle Editor: Lira B. Zulueta

Antique's ancient Santo Niño icon stolen

HERITAGE vigilantes in the Visayas have advised that people should be on the lookout for the ivory head and hands of the Santo Niño image that had been stolen from the main altar of the Church of the Holy Child in Bugasong, Antique, last Jan. 16.

Identifying marks: the head is about 13 cm high with an ivory face and back portion of wood; right hand is raised in blessing and the tip of the left hand's second finger is chopped.

Because of the active antique market, computer discovery of church art gives unattended in this country, causing collectors to unwittingly house stolen items. However few collectors are as principled as the one who, upon verification that an image he purchased was stolen, returned the image to Barbazon Church in Isabel where it rightfully belonged.

The theft of the Santo Niño every month a strong signal for parish priests to finally undertake a thorough inventory of heritage property in their care, which has been strongly suggested by the CBCP Permanent Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Only a few parishes have complied with the inventory.

Parish priests must be made aware that as custodians of some of our nation's most significant heritage, they are as accountable to the Filipino people for safeguarding our various [illegible].

Transcent says its [illegible] about the training station immediately in the Museum of Arts and Sciences at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila (tel. 731-3515, fax 7405738, e-mail ucpo@mnl.sur.edu.ph), or call Bishop Jumalo de la Cruz at the Diocese of San José de Antique at San José de Buenavista, Antique (tel. 036 5400186, fax 036 5400667).

Heritage run

What used to be the yearly Pasig River Heritage Marathon has changed to what is now the Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River. Held every last Sunday of February, the marathon is now an international event accredited by two international organizations, the Association of International Marathons and Road Races and International Association of Athletics Federations.

The international marathon refuses to shake off its Filipino identity. The route through from old Manila in the west, moving to colonial Intramuros to end in ultramodern Ortigas City. It weaves in and out of Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati, Pasig and Taguig be- [illegible]

Art amid the rubble

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE ELEPHANT stands in a spire corner of suburban Makati.

REVIVING the art gallery concept by creating unbelievable yet distinctive ambiance to set off the varied artworks

Inquirer editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc with Makati City Councilor Nancy Peña at the ribbon-cutting ceremony

PEOPLE'S art space really be booming. More than the outstanding showing of Philippine master pieces in art auctions abroad, the visible sign is the mopping up of art galleries right and left in Metro Manila and other urban centers.

They suddenly appear like mushrooms even in unlikely places. Two years ago, one opened under the MRT tracks at one end of Guadalupe Bridge in Makati City. Last November, another opened amid the chaotic shops of Banawe.

Bluewave Art Gallery is the latest addition to the scene. Its name notwithstanding, its walls are stark gray, there's not a touch of blue anywhere near, except for the commercial strip of skyscrapers that ringing the building and dividing its two levels.

The name refers to its owner's love for the blues. An audiophile, Fine Arts professor and abstract painter, Rafael Ignacio has a passion for rhythm and blues, science fiction and novels, and jets there in his spare time are seen in the gallery.

The gallery stand to be the ground floor of his home at 1254 Gen. Luzuriaga St., Bangkal, Makati City, which he renovated to showcase the artworks of his students in the Technology and University of the Philippines College of Arts and Trade.

"They're winners in art competitions," he says, says of these budding artists. "It is to showcase their talents that I've opened this gallery, and not to sell art that's merely commercial."

He designed the exhibition area himself, including the lighting fixtures and sound system. It has 30-sq m room with irregular shape, overhead spotlights, tall rectangular windows.

The artworks on the walls are mostly figurative Expressionist, with some abstracts. The mood is, of course, jazz, the blues.

"Sometimes it's classical, depending on my mood," says Ignacio.

The interior just as easily describes the

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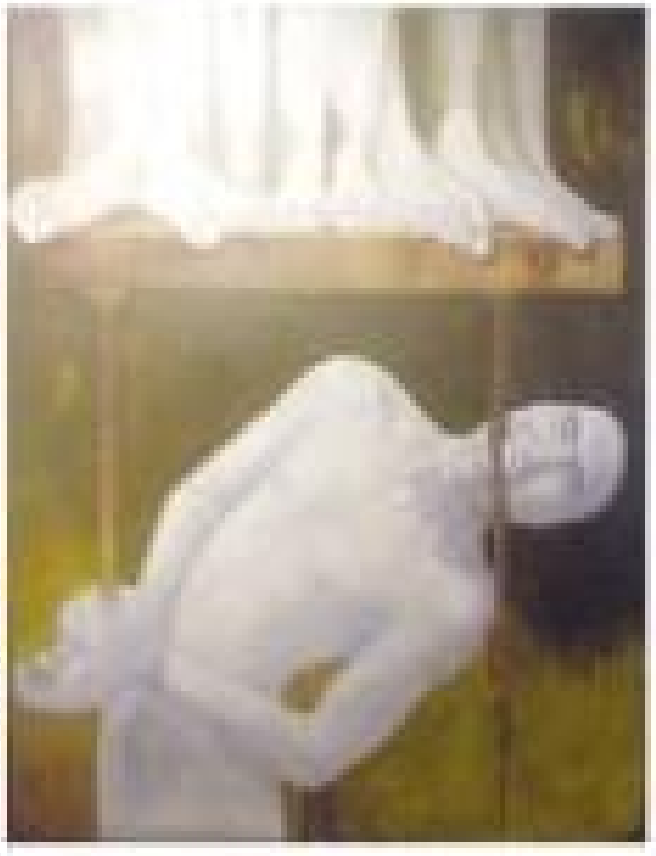


DUOCHROME from right: "Capacity Limited," by Rommel Fajardo; "Background of Overtones," by Ryan Rubio; "The Last Performance of a Crying Clown," by Fredilen Calayag

CENI Gonzales out of the kitchen

KAMAYAN de Sula, Tradition-loving trainer Philip Morris Javier Chaves, paints Session Road

Baguio is blooming again

By James P. Ong

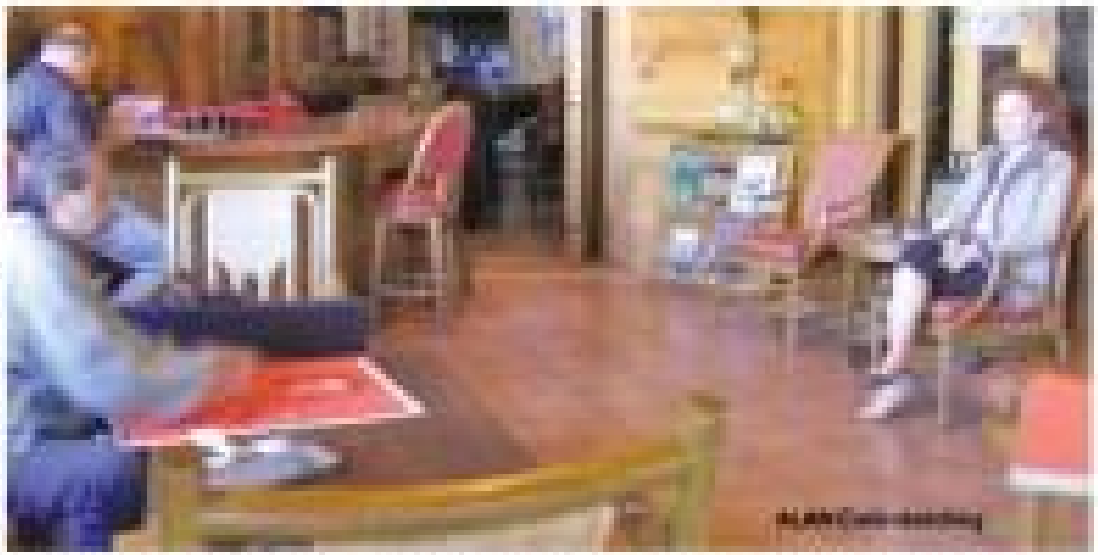
REPORT from Baguio City: the streets are safe, the city's alive and kicking, and the arts scene has never been this exciting.

On the recent Valentine weekend, along the stretch of Session Road, Kawayan de Gras rebroadcast what became a very lovely project—reviving the portable-ribbon road. Now 20, the artist was a Philip Morris Juniors' Chaser way back last year.

On the same weekend, Camp John Hay's The Manor hotel decided to throw a big to-do for loyal clients and media guests to drum up publicity for the city and send the message that not only is it safe to come back to Baguio—it was never unsafe to visit in the first place.

Like the rest of the city's populations, The Manor's general manager, Heiner Muellerleile, still feels that reports from Manila over the last months exaggerated the cases of meningococcemia in the Summer Capital, doing great harm to its tourism and service industry.

"The first order of the day was to ask our City Hall to get a certificate from the World Health Organization stating that Baguio is safe," he says. And so now, their hotel rooms are supplied with that update. "Most of the suspected cases did not show positive results for meningococcemia after the obligatory testing but were reported to the press as meningococcal meningitis cases. All reported deaths caused by this bacteria were due to ignorance about the proper treatment of the illness. Immediate meningitis is easily treated with antibiotics, just like any other bacterial infection."



ALAN Cano dancing

Baguio artists hold sessions at Camp John Hay's The Manor to show there's an epidemic—of art, beauty and gracious living

Cultural weekend

The weekend event was billed "Weekend of Romance, Arts, Art and Culture" and featured local singers and dancers, as well as special meals by resident chef wonder Billy King.

A special highlight of the event was an on-the-spot painting session with senior artist couple, Alan and Joy Cano, Gener Gonzales and Baguio-based Felipe Maximo.

"Baguio is always a wonderful place to create art," says Cano.

"The works of all three are also available at the hotel.

In a way this push for artists-in-residence is just a continuation of a tradition started by MacEachen back when he was managing the Hyatt hotel in Baguio. "I give the artists food and lodging so they can create art which we then put on exhibit," he says.

MacEachen is optimistic that the tourism industry in Baguio will make a positive turn soon. In fact, The Manor is already building a second hotel needing a part of which is expected to be operational by December.

"The next few weeks will be a flurry of cultural activities not just at the hotel, but in the entire city itself as it celebrates the month-long "Panagbenga."

Artist and filmmaker Eric de Guia, a.k.a. Kidlat Tahimik, is creating this year's flower festival, which he entitled "Kalik Balikbik," as a way to "renew in the Bontocnons of the festival." He says the past festivals had been too commercialized.

One of the resolutions this year is to ban carnosaurs and ponies along Session Road. There are also a series of flower-themed activities all over the city.

Astra combines figurative and abstract works in show

"WILL," by Isidro Jacoco

AETNA Gallery (2/F Lilli Fuentes Plaza, Benpoint St., Makati) will open the exhibit "Gigabiter" on Feb. 23, at 5:30 p.m. The show brings together figurative artists Ian Quintero and Arlito Jococo and abstractionists Art Serrano and Francisco Magbanua.

The artists say: "In cognitive value a necessary condition for a high degree of aesthetic value? To have cognitive value, they say, an artwork must not only make new insights available, but also justify those insights. After all, knowledge requires justification. In short, should an artwork, to be worthy of the name, contribute to knowledge?

"Their artistic representations, by providing us with an experience that resembles in certain ways the experience of the represented object, can present and demonstrate the circumstances of a perspective on the represented object. On the other hand, contemporary art, while often shying away from illustration, makes extensive use of symbols as appropriation and conceptualization that allow it to probe deeply into a wide variety of topics, including those most central to our understanding of the human condition.

"This exhibit eliminates the term non-cognitive, because whether your standard inspires new insights or just an expression of oneself, it is no doubt worthy of the name 'art.' The vision is, thrice undivided by behaviors' and the object is to eradicate the notion of 'high art' and 'low art.'

"STIMULUS" III, by Bermido

"STIMULUS" III, by Art Bermido

Carlo Magno works unveiled at BMW

ABSTRACTIONIST Carlo Magno unveils his latest works at Prestige Cars BMW, Makati City on Feb. 23 at 6 p.m.

Titled "Abounding Prosperity," the exhibit features 25 works to welcome the Year of the Rooster, which the artist believes will be a propitious year for the Philippine economy as well as for Philippine art.

Magno has won art contests, including the grand prize of the Hyperrealist Art Center. He is fascinated by Asian, particularly Eastern civilizations and ancient cultures. For this show, he moves away from the strong and bold textures of geometric abstractionism and moves into Eastern abstractionism of many Japanese and Chinese artists. The works are more introspective and thought-provoking.

Prestige Cars has embarked on a major art appreciation campaign by hosting top contemporary artists in its main showrooms. Prestige Cars is at 2329 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City. Call 8928127 or 7229253.

"GOLDEN Monsoon"

CARLO Magno beside a BMW 2005 i325 series

Feati students' works on exhibit

NAPOLEON Abueva

ARACELI Limcaco Dans

NATIONAL artist Napoleon V. Abueva will be the guest of honor at the opening of Feati University's "Strong Pinoy," an art exhibit by Feati University's students of fine arts, architecture and engineering.

Feati University's senior art students, painters and art educator Araceli Limcaco Dans, is supervising the exhibit.

"Strong Pinoy" opens on Feb. 16, 4 p.m., and will extend to March 5, to commemorate the 59th anniversary of Feati University.

Other guests are visual artist Jester Ting and architect-painter Javier Ignacio. The exhibit is open to the public.

Call 7367337 or 8916 2221347.

Art amid the rubble

Please page D3

place in an art space, the logarithmbles from the trash shops selling second-hand electronic items and household utensils and recyclables lining the street. In a visiting journalist has commented, the place has ambience.

An entrance to Bankard by a pair of long low benches improvised from bread crates festooned artificial ivy potted plants, a screen of recycled wood cargo crate side and a coffee table by the glass-panel door. Above is a cardboard awning of corrugated fiberglass sheets throwing patterns of light on the pavement.

The gallery was opened on Nov. 29 with the exhibit "Sea/Blue," which ran through January. There are works by Bernice Rajindo, Thomas Dagdagan, Jerry Cabredo, Ibrahim Coloring, Ryan Bobis, Lorenzo Antonio Nazal, Jocelyn Ying, and Ignacio Salicrup, with Bobby Francisco as guest artists.

Among the notable pieces are Rajindo's "Background of Doubt/Jazz," in oil on marine board; Cabredo's "Dance for Me," oil on jute fabric; Bajacda's "Capacity Loaded," oil on canvas; Ignacio's "Known Unknown Room," mixed media, mixed pieces in oil on canvas.

In December, the venue hosted a series of performances by the group of painter Rosalido Roda and sculptor Lito Salvador.

Ignacio is excited about the limited of performances set by the same group and some foreign artists slated in his place this month. Only three months old and already big things are happening.

CHRP Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and National Commission for Culture and Arts (NCCA) executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez open "100 Years of Hindunan di Pinoy: Photographic Journey," an exhibit by the Philippine Center for Photojournalists, Inc., at the Supreme Court lobby. The opening was part of the celebration of the National Arts Month 2005. Also in photo are former senator Heherson Alvarez and former SC associate justice Amuna Bautista Hermosisima.

Baldemor in Jakarta, Impy at Avellana, Kiukok at Finale

VISUAL ARTS

THE ASEAN Women's Circle is presenting the works of Michael Baldemor at the Colombian House in Kuningan, South Jakarta. "Visualizing" is about Filipino-Balinese folk and ritual festival. The show is for the benefit of the Indonesian victims and Filipino victims of the recent typhoons.

THE ARTS LOUNGE Gallery (A-10, 2600 F. Jacinto St., between Elba Corporate and Libertad St., opposite Gideon Academy, Pasay City) opens today the exhibit of new works by Impy Pilapil. The show has an exhibit opening at 5:30 p.m. Call 8508805, 8358865.

"FLIES and Mysteries," by Manuel D. Baldemor

ATENEO ART Gallery (3rd Megatrend) is presenting the paintings and mixed-media works of freshmen students from the University of the Philippines-College of Fine Arts and Design. 23 to the artists' Thesis 111.2." Participating students under professors Lalaine Nadia Ubalde Pelayo are Jessica Antonio, Kelly Bautista, Gary Barua, Anne Bellantes, Jose Bueta, Maria Luz Capones, Mara Cruz, Mich Dulce, Kat Dulce, Pedro Paolo Luis Francisco, Carlo Mendoza de Guzman, Darren Hamlan, Jin Jason, Amanda F. Laguata, Edbelli Lalanga, Filipino Lacsado, Dianna Mallari, Joel Macabasco, Pat Manuel, Anabelle B. Pelea, Mea Pepon, Francesca Reyes, Michael Vincent Uy, A.S. Valdez A. and Sherilyn Vargas. Call 4034101.

"LUMINESCENCE," by Marivic Bulleo

MICHAEL D. Coniuela unveils in Link, Lounge Ad and PR Corporate's "Linkages" shows the rich blending of colors, shapes, and lines. It will be the center of Lounge's 2005 corporate ornamentation program.

THE GREEN Group Nothing-nothing and the Malaysian art group Mahabub are featured in a series of interactive paintings and installation canvases at the Pinoy Art Gallery (3rd Floor, Metro St., Grand Heights, Antipolo City, Rizal) on Feb. 27-Mar. 20.

"LINKAGE" I, by Michael Coniuela

BOSTON Gallery (117 Boston St., Cubao, Quezon City) presents "Where We Are, Ferdinand Montemayor and Emmanuel Garibay in separate but simultaneous solo shows of recent works on canvas and paper on Feb. 28 to March 18. Call 7290050.

THE DRAWING Room presents Jayson Oliveria's "Welsh Pastels," until March 12. The exhibit features canvases which have been roll on, stained, scorched up and bombarded with intense color schemes. Call 8819080/1 ET.

AYALA Museum presents a major exhibit, "Crossings: Philippine Prints from the Singapore Art Museum." The exhibit is organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore. Until June 19. Call 7577111/19.

"LINKAGE" 2, by Coniuela

AYALA Museum presents Lifelong Doing, an on-the-spot painting competition open to high school students (12-18 years old) on March 5. Entry forms are available at the Ruby Office at the Ayala Museum (Makati Avenue and the Ayala St., Greenbelt Park, Makati Center, Makati City). Call 7577111, 7525500. Entries may also be submitted through fax at 7575889 or 8450 855.

"WINDOW with Cat," by Kiukok

Kiukok signature show opens tomorrow at the Pavilion of Jesus Christ, with life-figurehills, cinema, Mother and Child, nudes and various animals will be presented in "Kiukok Recent Works 2000-2004" exhibit at the SM Art Center, Feb. 23-March 13.

'Strange' love

A mesmerizing look at magicians, this book is a masterpiece of nerdy brilliance

By Rueli S. De Vera

THEY are among the most fascinating and entertaining characters around. Merlin. Gandalf. The Grey. Saruka. Prospero. Harry Potter. They are magicians, conjurers of concept and curiosity, wizards with names so powerful in their origins as folklore, fable or fiction.

Because they provide a tantalizing combination of humanity and paranormal divinity, these characters transcend the usual limitations of being spawned on the page, or sifted, lasting a bit of the universal in the process... and to the reader's vision.

Now, meet two new members of that powerful pantheon. Introducing Jonathan Strange and Gilbert Norrell, the titular protagonists/antagonists of first-time author Susanna Clarke's massive, marvelous "Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell" (Bloomsbury London, 2004. 782 pages; with illustrations by Portia Rosenberg). Two people, so different as can be—one of them just so one would imagine a magician to be like (aloof, cold, gentlemanly, almost every thing you'd think a magician shouldn't be. This unlikely love-hate, master-protégé relationship lies at the heart of "Strange," but also holds the future of English magic.

It is 1806, and England is mourning her lost Mike magic, it left in the country's years since the fabled Raven King of magic—using rules of long left the English scene. Amid the clashes of so-called theoretical magicians and the charlatanism of self-styled magicians, an extremely eccentric, bookish and unlikely man arrives together with his dusty, very spectacle, Childermass. Deploring astounding feats of magic and leaving almost all others to give up their pursuits of magic, Gilbert Norrell is hoisted by the public and moves up in society, effectively becoming the only magician left to us magic and advise us in its mysteries.

But from nowhere, a seemingly aimless, wealthy young man begins to display an instinctive, precocious knowledge of things magical, from Somerset Midsummer to making a 'snare for himself. Both and administration, Strange soon comes to the attention of Norrell, who is delighted to find the man who becomes Norrell's only pupil.

But all this happens in the first third of the 750-plus page "Strange," so much we know that all is not what it seems. Even as the two magicians begin to develop their unique styles of magician-ship, with Norrell losing up to his huge library and Strange going to work for the government on the breakfast of the wars. But there is so much stirring behind the scenes that, when the two men finally part ways, bitterly, they still remain joined by their actions.

A fateful spell by Norrell to save a young woman's life leads to a terrible bargain with a dangerous fairy known only as the gentleman with the black-dress hat, and that decision will affect virtually everyone else in "Strange." Why is Norrell buying all the magical books and hiding them away? What mysterious late has befallen Strange's mentor and household servant Mr. Norrell's henchman, Childermass, Lascelles and Drawlight up to good or ill? What has all this have to do with the vanished, reputed magician known as 'Vinculus'? And why does all that seem to have been foretold by a cryptic prophecy that involves not only the two magicians but also the legendary Raven King?

For the very first page, "Strange" is a challenging book, one that does not hold itself easily learned reading. But only is the first part full of explanatory elements and place-setting, but Clarke's prose is still relatively dense and measured, full of unique expressions and spelling. Yet the book is so constructed full of marvelous tales within tales—Strange's footnotes come more than a page long) actually tell peripheral stories that are complete by themselves.

"Strange" requires patience in the beginning, because the many departures of events, often wrapped in subtle changes, seem to fly off into all sorts of tangents.

But once the novel starts going, it seems to gain a life, a spirit all its own. Much is due to the complex, layered plot, for it creates a duo to Clarke's world, multi-layered characters, as we can point, all the characters seem like useful people, real or other fictive, utterly seamless, because seem. Readers will find their own characters (or magicians) more than others, and that due to design. And one will one find a sentence to creepy and somewhat like or the more grandiose. To point other, Clarke shows how magic can be twisted and used for the evil, even in a world of political maneuvering, human politics and nobility.

The only textured prose feels like a luxury and there is nothing about "Strange" that feels rushed. The expansive style novel rewards a reader's devotion with an enthralling, often dark yet always expansive adventure of intrigue—and even romantic romance. In the novel matches to a sublime end, it becomes clear that "Strange" tells of things beyond magic—of loneliness and evil, of devotion and love even to the eldritch prophecy begun to unravel around everybody, even with randomness and homecomings of sorts. Journeying into truly unexpected locations, the book tells of the things unbound by spells and charms. And that is why readers must, at their best, experience it like the time of the magicians: non-worldmay comes as of Ironsides Clarke's astounding "Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell."

Available at Fully Booked

Romance and saga of the Nepomucenos

An oral history of a Pampanga entrepreneurial clan is a major contribution to local history

By Jose Victor Torres
Contributor

"A COFRADIA of Text" (Holy Angel University Press, 2004. 460 pages) by Edilia Mendoza is the fourth book published by the Philippine Studies Institute Press. But has, so far, done a good job in presenting Kapampangan history and culture here and abroad. Through the Juan D. Nepomuceno Center for Research in Pampanga in Bacolor. It is also the only publication of the seven books that the center has published, each to its very interesting antecedent (Kapampangan) and in scholarly journal Library).

"A Cofradia of Text" is not just another local history of the Nepomuceno couple through the eyes of their children. It is also the story of the growth of Angeles, the first city of Pampanga.

The gist on the back cover can interpret the primary issues the antagonists of the husband and wife team.

We couple had been as different from each other as Saint and Teresa. Nepomuceno came. He graduated summa cum laude, the same year beyond graduation, he was Assistant attorney and a lawyer, he was a self-taught businessman. When they put up a business, he daughter only of how it could serve God and community, while it was up to her to worry about the sales and bills. Morally –

Yet, together, they opened the first electric plant and first waterfall for about of the region, the country's first Catholic school run by lay people, a private subdivision that eventually saved the city's layout and social status, a commercial district that molded into the tastes of their children, and a way self-made. In few that crossed the world, and the nation's largest brewery. ."

That luminescence takes from the Nepomucenos' eight surviving children and two of their daughters-in-law make up the main part of the book. Through their words, the couple comes alive and gives us an understanding of the legacies they left behind to Angeles City.

Adventure

Mendoza, a researcher of the University of Santo Tomas Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, also tells the Nepomucenos story in an oral style that is as exhilarating as words.

We learn from her of the trials and triumphs of the Nepomucenos family in their many through war, childhood illnesses, and just ordinary means. The narrative not only tells a family's life, but also shows a time that is contributed much to the rise of Angeles from mere a barrio to a city.

One fact Mendoza handled well in relating to the first of four of Teresa's ancestors. The writer-historian presents Manuela and the Augustinian friar, Guillermo Masnou, was a well-accepted fact in their community, even though such a relation would have caused a scandal.

It must be remembered that the sexual affairs of the religious was a point of the anti-friar campaign by the Filipinos propagandists like Rizal and Marcelo del Pilar. In the case, it seems like affair was no big deal for the Augustinian.

A characteristic of this book is which the reviewer was, in fact, hesitant to point out, to its literary-reviewer-cultural history.

Facts from eyewitnesses may add color to historical narratives, but it is not from interviews. There is also a danger of the latter not being checked or cross-examined. Hearsay can only serve as much. Mendoza should have looked into her sources with clues from primary sources.

Her many is very informative about the family but the reader is left in the dark about the city's setting. A background on the city's history, its political and economic life of Angeles from its beginnings as a town to its growth as a city is needed.

Some questions are also left unanswered. Who were the other participants in Angeles and how did the Nepomucenos interact with them? What business and political enemies part of the town's life? Though there may be beyond Mendoza's scope, it is important that the reader is given an idea of the pre-existing background. They will give an understanding of the context in which we can see the family's resilience in times of war and civil turmoil and economic collapse.

Mendoza's framework also relies on religiosity as part of her narrative. Many stories in her text should of it in this book. One encounters one to one with great references including the role that there is a danger that the Nepomucenos' story sounds too good to be true.

However serious, "A Cofradia of Text" is an engaging work of social and local history. Learning about a place means knowing its history, places, events and personalities. In the case of Pampanga, Mendoza's book is a great resource to have a part of that province's past.

"A Cofradia of Text" is available at Museo Alunda on the third floor of Ayala Museum, Greenbelt. Copies of the book should University's Kapampangan Center and the Orlando Bookstore.

6th UST national writers workshop now accepting applications

THE UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies to now accepting manuscripts for the 56th UST National Writers Workshop to be held on April 17-23.

The workshop will focus on poetry, Bahasa Indonesia and play, in both English and Filipino. It is open to students who have not been awarded fellowships to any national writers workshop.

An applicant should submit five full-length and a duplicate copy (MS Word format) of his/her manuscript, one language per manuscript, containing at least five poems, or two short stories, or two one-act plays, a resume, and 2x2 ID photo. applicants should also enclose a certification duly signed by the head of his/her institution/company that the article submitted are authentic and have not been copied from elsewhere.

Students to meet all requirement will receive honorarium/allowance/stipend.

There are 15 fellowships available, 4 percentage of which will be given to non-attendants of the Dominican Institutions of Schools, Colleges and Universities.

The deadline for submission is on March 19.

Successful applicants will be granted fellowships that will cover student board and lodging. To conduct the workshop are Ophelia A. Alcantara, Bienvenido N. Lumbera, Cirilo F. Bautista, and the members of the USTWW.

Call 406 1611 local 8201.

Young Cavite writers pay tribute to canonical regional writers

AS PART of the celebration of 2005 National Arts Month at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, the Cavite Center for Creative Young Writers Association (CCWA) will read the works of prominent writers of the province from the 1896 Revolution up to the early 1960s.

Together with the launching of a video-documentary on Cavite and DLSU Dasmariñas Hymn by the Mitsi Commercial Corporation of Annie Susilo, there will also be a presentation of Dancing Ballerinas by the BATH of the Dancing Arts Group at the university's Tanglang Bulong Kalim Bulips.

To be read are prose and poems by Diego Silang, Carlos P. Romulo, Trinidad Tecson and Hermogenes Ilagan of the late 19th and early 19th century to and present and post-war works of writers Alejandro Abadilla, Teo S. Baylen, David Mamaril, Ric de la Cruz, Teo S. Baluyot, Ambassador Ed Lilial, Rogelio Ordoñez, Jimmuel Naval and Kristoffer B. Berlanga.

Readers from different Cavite schools will be: Ronald Pelias, president of CCWA; Alvares Bautista, Mark Anthony Bunoc, Bienvenido Perlito, Shirley Gonzales, Leslie Anne Ramos and Raoul Cavalido; Lekhor Lubi; Rose of Lucia Sara Encarnacion and Dana Jo-seniors Dennis Theodore Gacoli.

TextulaPinoy winners tackle the environment

A GRADUATING mathematician-master of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and a retired Filipino professor from the Batasang-ng Lungsod of Quezon City have clinched second and third prizes in the "TextulaPinoy" the poetry-writing contest through SMS technology of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in observance of the 2005 National Arts Month.

The contrasting images in the proverbs of Noel Ferrer and Gregorio Rodillo raised cut by no more than 6,000 entries that were tested in from all over the country.

And Greta Maldonado, John-Jason Love Bala, Jess Ferrer, Edward Jacinto, Mark Jeffry Rivera, Lei Lindecha, Yvone Rosario and Jose Bryan Control are consolation-prize winners.

National Artist Virgilio S. Almario, chair of the board of judges, was delighted that the contest's entry effected their specific environmental problems in the provinces.

The winning entries:

Ginto ng mga tao
Ginto ng mga isda
Ginto ng mga ibon
Ang mga kagubatan
Ang mga bundok
Ang mga ilog
Ang mga dagat
Ang mga bukirin
Ang mga kapatagan
Ang mga kabundukan
Ang mga kalupaan
Ang mga kalawakan
Ang mga kalangitan
Ang mga kalikasan
Ang mga kapaligiran
Ang mga kapaligiran
Ang mga kapaligiran

RP's best more appreciated by foreign audiences?

Filipino prize-winners are going on concert tours abroad but can hardly get to play in their country's national orchestra

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

CHOO violinists, flutists and trumpeters, the country's most consistent winners of goodwill crowns are here adding to the performing arts.

Cecile Licad's first engagement this year, in January, in the Pro Musica season concert "French Impressions" at the Southern Theater in Columbus, Ohio, drew an ecstatic response. She played Ravel's Concerto in G.

Licad will be reunited with Jaime Fullero, maestro of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra's Eugene Cantelli, who will conduct the Virginia Symphony in Chopin No. 2, Feb. 26-27 at the Chrysler Hall, Norfolk.

With Kitaro conducting the Buffalo Philharmonic, Licad will be soloist in Bach 3 April 2-3 at the Kleinhans Music Hall. By insistent public and critics' demand, Licad will open Madison Symphony's 76th season with Bach 3 under conductor John DeMain Sept. 20-21.

But Licad is not just a child and audience favorite but also a favorite of co-artists. Piano goddess Martha Argerich called Licad the "greatest pianist of her generation."

After a Licad performance in Los Angeles, film celebrities Judy Kaye and Joan Collins were so moved they had to go backstage to meet the Filipino pianist.

Other Licad showbiz admirers are actress Cesar Montano and Julian Feleogan. Montano feted Licad in a special recital during the birthday of Madam Dida Ahaya, after watching a Pavelli concert in the Araneta Coliseum. He later said, "There's still nothing like a Licad performance."

Licad also impressed her chamber music partners and one of the world's best, Estonian cellist Alfon Gerhardt. He told music writer Tina Lhotzi in an interview that, among the pianists he had worked with, his favorite was Licad.

Gerhardt said Licad was "a pianist who practically creates the pieces as she plays them. She studies the scores very carefully but then she makes them her own and comes up with something new." He described one piece as "so beautiful that I got chills while playing it."

Meanwhile, baritone Raul Aragon, without doubt the most formidable discovery among the new batch of singers, will give a solo recital March 13 in St. Paul University Pagsanjan-City. He will be joined by soprano Jovie Cano and pianist Rajib Ismail on March 27 in the historic City of Malolos in Bulacan to life. The concert is presented by the Malolos Catholic Women's League in association with the office of Bishop Pantaleon Alvarez, probably the country's only town executive who can double as impresario.

For inquiries, call Music House at 09175779851.

Oliver Salonga, two-time winner in the National Music Competition of Young Artists (Pianoza), won his second concerto competition in the United States with Liszt's Second Concerto for Bbm one in Bach 13. He performed Bach 2 in Sydney in January and recently won here in Janeville.

He admitted he learned a lot from Licad's coaching in New York in September. As part of his prize, Salonga is now touring the United States with the school orchestra, playing his prize-winning concerto, Liszt No. 2.

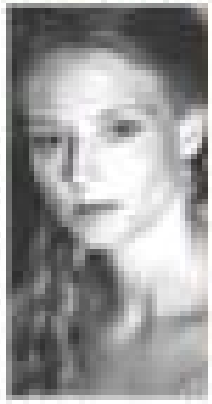
Another genuine violin prodigy, Chino Gutierrez, is making waves in Munich, Germany but not as a promising violinist but as a Mahler enigma and public speaker. He memorized eight minutes of a Gustav poem and delivered them in flawless German. He also won over fans in a violin competition. He also won first prize in a school "spelldown" in Germany.

Another Pianoza winner, cellist Yvone Mildred Cua, who has just won in a crossover competition, performed in a festival as part of his prize. He is soon on a US tour with a school orchestra.

Filipino prize winners are being showered off by schools abroad through nationwide concert tours but can hardly get to play in the Philippines' national orchestra unless they shell out at least P500,000.00 a performance and rare orchestras.

It seems the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) resident impresarios cannot invest interest except those supplied by Imagitia Foundation for its Filipino artists Series and the PPO season concerts. The foundation is headed by a members of the CCP board of trustees.

LICAD dilipo an orgy of admirers



JOSE Feeler and Joan Collins (below) are among the Hollywood celebrities who called on Licad after her LA performance.

BARITONE Raul Aragon

Assumption stages musical

IN CELEBRATION of Marian Month (September) and the coveted completion of its new theater, Assumption College is staging an original musical called "3,000" with music by Ian de Guzman.

It is a tribute to Marie Eugenie, founder of the Religious of The Assumption, the congregation that runs the Assumption Schools.

Students, staff, teachers and other parent artists will be performing in the musical, under the direction of Ana Valdes-Lim.

Co-writing the music is Philip Valdez, with lyrics by Carlos "Pido" Aguilar. Choreography is by Chito Miguel, and musical direction by Bernie Reyes and Pete Rivera.

The Assumption Voices, Assumption Community Theater, Dancemove with Chito Miguel, Ena Rivera Manalastas and the Philippine Madrigal will also perform in the production.

"3,000" stands for the 4,000 letters that Marie Eugenie and Father D'Alzon wrote to each other. The letters are a witness to Marie Eugenie's strengths, virtues and humanity.

"We hope '3,000' will spread Marie Eugenie's spirit to the hearts of young and old as they witness her arid and rise above through beautiful music and dance numbers," says Valdez Lim.

The show runs March 11-12, 7:30 p.m., at the college gym. Tickets are at P300. Call 09175263.

CAST members of Assumption College's new musical, "3,000"

Room of spirits

By Ian Rosales Casocot
INQ Visayas Bureau

HIDDEN somewhere in a Mexican restaurant called Cucalorongos—located along the northern stretch of Domagoso City's famous Boulevard—is an adobe-brown dining room, which is increasingly becoming the most important space for art in this city down south, in Negros Oriental.

Here, a kind of awakening is stirring what had always been a vibrant, although surprisingly low-key, community of artists.

The city had always boasted of artists of no pretentious rank, with equally impressive names: Kitty Taniguchi and her Babylonic female dianetics, for example, and daughter Sheila Taniguchi's symphonic touch.

In their tender entre l'art, sisters names in Domagoso art that may command considerable attention in the years to come.

In an exhibit aptly called "Waves of Healing," artists Susan Canoy and Sharon Dudang-Rubio have finally come into their own. Their artistic natures fall hushed in an exhibit that celebrates spirituality in manifestations of universal worship, or instead angel.

Marked departure

Canoy's work—composed mostly of acrylic paintings on antique rarra wood—is a marked departure from the dreams and stress motifs that had characterized her early paintings, not always done successfully.

But in these new works, she has achieved that ambitious mark to people her canvas with folkloric elements, and render them with intensity and meaning.

This time around, she takes on the celebratory nature of Filipino religiosity and mounts them in the form of calendar dials, each canvas reminiscent of those spiral-framed instruments of ice swords and ancient shields that used to grace many Filipino homes.

Set on black tablets, stylized wood panels, mounted on the sides with decorative metal door handles that seem to suggest a welcome to narrators of rituals, are rendered with names from the Catholic festivals of saints. All are done in Amoroso hearts, the acrylic finish reaching a vibrant quality.

Canoy devotes one work to each month of the year, a dial in the center indicating the various festivities set in that month. Just highlighting the rare celebration that defines the city.

For January there is "Sadsad sa Kasimanwang Pasalubong," the top showing a scene of a young man playing guitar in the middle of a rice rice field, and the bottom with scenes in the horizon.

For October, the artist celebrates the Oriental Negrense Baglalan tradition in "Pagsanting," with Domagoso's boulevard rendered in festive colors on the top, and the provincial capitol on the bottom in an energy of people dancing to the Baglalan beat.

More introspective

But while Canoy's works celebrate the vitality and often Orwellian rites to communicate our everyday spirituality, Dudang-Rubio works suggest a more introspective turn of worship, maybe even internal struggles of faith.

Here is a work of miniature intimacy. The paintings...are a set of small ones presented visually as triptychs—are outer expressions of inner pieces and their rage, amounts of white with strokes of wider, foreboding and meditative, set against a backdrop of blackness.

They are almost like Scandinavian blue seas, and sometimes what is hidden in the chaos of color are startling forms that resemble phantom faces (close-up the most haunting degree in the "Epiphany" triptych, throbbing veins, and palimpsests of beholden landscapes.

The "Zen Series" is a simple exercise of Chinese watercolor ink on paper, in a kind of quilted array effect that reaches beyond chaos. They provide windows. To what? To inner wildness, and to eventual calm?

"Nalas" and "Enamel" are portraits, perhaps, of the keenest of our inner sensations, at once organic and sensuous. "My Prayer," on the other hand, is a tornado of red and browns of green, ubiquitously revealing a haunting woman's face.

"Our RHYME" is a set of five panels that approximate a rough sequence of events and lines circulating Crescendo and have keeps, to end, like the other painting, to a portrait of saints of a crucified expression.

"The Witch" is a splatter of red smoldering pain. Even in a modest extent, a theme which bleeds to "Breathe," which shows a stark landscape of horror over shadowed and ruined buildings, all shrouded in purple decadence.

Two women with singular virtues on viewing the testimonial, reflecting our individual responses to the effected, the ritualistic, and the meditative.

To that adobe room in that restaurant, the spirits loom, hovering out of the canvases and finally into our lives.

The exhibit runs until Feb. 28 in Cucalorongos, Noel Boulevard, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.

"HIGA Panaad ug Higa/Panampo" by Susan Canoy (left) and "My Prayer" by Sharon Dudang-Rubio (above)

"PAGSAGUDO" by Canoy

Ancient Santo Niño icon stolen

From page C1

...four arriving as the finish line to the dreams of the Global City skyscrapers.

The marathon passes over bridges and crosses bridges but keeps in close contact with the Pasig River. It is visible on foot the river to the forgotten corner of Bonifacio Shr and it desperately needs our help.

In ending the marathon brings many aspects of Filipino life to the forefront, connecting the environment, its principal focus, to fishing, heritage conservation, culture, tourism and sports. The event fits it all together, as "Ilog ang Buhay mo," challenged the organizers.

The marathon's "Survival Handbook" does the figuring out for one. Since I have no running ambitions, the handbook is what she sees me to the marathon.

The handbook tells me that the PMPA course is unique. "While most races adopt an out-and-back method, this one is a point-to-point running event," it says. Its course follows the Pasig riverbanks, crosses 11 of the 13 bridges traversing the river in addition to going across the bridge over the San Juan River, a Pasig tributary.

Running adjacent to the waters of the Pasig, the marathon drinks home the point that the river needs help from everyone but the run also acknowledges the need to preserve heritage as it passes historic landmarks and edifices, narrow small riverside communities, navigates through narrow side streets and wide streets.

At Km 00, the Marathon starts at the Plaza de Roxas in front of the Manila Cathedral, heads eastward for Jose Rizal Bridge (Km 01) passing the Fort Santiago wall beside Nivel Park, a park developed by the Green and Green Foundation, which also refurbished the bridges over the Pasig as its contribution to the Philippine Centennial celebration in 1998. The structures deteriorated after they were turned over to the City of Manila for "non-maintenance." That is another story.

Back to the run, from Muelle de la Industria (Km 02) on the north bank of the Pasig, the view of Fort Santiago and Intramuros is superb. The run passes El Hogar building, a decaying but still elegant pre-World War II structure on the Pasig quay. From there the route crosses the river once again on Jones Bridge, heading towards Taft Avenue and the double-decked Ayala Bridge.

The handbook points out places of interests along the route. Living with historical data and trivia, it states that Sto. Cruz Church (Km 06) was built by the Jesuits in 1758, and then says that San Beda College in Mendiola (Km 11) is just about the last all-male college in the country.

Lawton Street in front Ateneo (Km 11) was once part of the old kingdom of Sanmaan which Rajo Sulayman ruled before the Spanish arrived here. Crossing Lambingan Bridge into Binondo, the route passes Binondo Church (Km 13), the oldest church in the country, and Ongpin Street, the center of Binondo's Chinatown.

Crossing the Quezon Bridge (Km 14), the route passes the Quiapo Church, the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene, and the Plaza Miranda, the site of the bombing that killed nine people and injured many others during the campaign rally of the Liberal Party in August 1971.

Entering Sampaloc, the route passes the Manila Central University, the University of the East and the Far Eastern University. Crossing the Nagtahan Bridge (Km 16), the route passes the Nagtahan Interchange, the Pandacan Oil Depot and the Malacañang Palace complex.

Crossing the Mendiola Bridge (Km 17), the route passes the Malacañang Palace complex, the Mendiola Peace Arch, the area of the river from the mouth to the north still remains as Concepcion St. (Km 18) that approaches the Makati-Mandaluyong Bridge (Km 19), one of the Commission Bridges (the bridges by the Clean and Green Foundation (the redesigned lines and striped color schemes of the bridges had been recommended, prompting motorists to visit my the observation to our government tasks).

The last view of the Pasig is from the Carlos P. Garcia C-5 Bridge (Km 21) where "to your left is the Magsaysay floodway and to its left is the newly old Ninoy International Capital before it moved to its present site on Ninoy Boulevard."

It's a pleasant view I always look forward to seeing...cranes standing on a blue in the hand of the Pasig, probably one of the last grand urban vistas left in Manila. It heralds the anniversary of C5 and the wall of mirroring roadside billboards that are pure urban sight.

"The last long stretch will test your perseverance and patience," writes the handbook when the route runs on C5 (spelling Km 22-37), entering the Port Boulevard area to end at the Finish Line (Km 42) where you must "please make sure that your finishing time is properly recorded."

The 1st International Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River is a full 42-km marathon mentioned to coincide courses with the New York, Boston and London city marathons. It hopes to attract strong foreign participation in the future.

For those with less stamina, there are 10-, 5-, and 3-km runs around Fort Bonifacio, but the 3km run is limited to ages 13 and below.

For information on the 1st International Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River, contact the Clean and Green Foundation or the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission at 527-6570-79.

If running through Manila isn't your thing, get a copy of the Marathon's Survival Handbook.

Perhaps the organizers could think of publishing an expanded version.

E-mail feedback to ajbal@inmail.com

MARATHON runners on the Makati-Mandaluyong Bridge advance the turnaround of Manila-Pasig River during the annual International Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River.

HERITAGE WATCH. The iron bust and hands of the Santo Niño statue were stolen from the main altar of the Santo Niño Church in Bagumbong, Caloocan, on Jan. 30. The crown base and gems recovered and the Church are still at large.

Seminar on how to put up a church museum

THE MANILA Archdiocesan Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church (MACC) of the Archdiocese of Manila will hold a seminar on today at the Bonifacio Building of the University of Santo Tomas, España, Manila.

The seminar, titled "Intro. Basics to Setting Up an Ecclesiastical Museum," aims to promote awareness of and basic education on church cultural heritage as instruments of evangelization.

The seminar will discuss the nature of an ecclesiastical museum, museum management, organization and exhibit basis, and general classification and cataloguing of ecclesiastical materials.

The speakers from the fold of museology are Fr. Isidro C. Abaño, O.P., chair of the MACC's Sub-Committee on Museums and director of the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences; Rizalda Alba of the National Museum's education division; and Prof. Reginaldo Ycasiano, chair of the MACC's Sub-Committee on Church Monuments and Religious Properties and a faculty member of the UST Graduate School's Cultural Heritage Studies program.

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